WRESTLING'S FULL-COLOR MAGAZINE

FLAIR REGAINS THE NWA TITLE!

Winter 1986 04853

$2.75 / $3.25 Canada

DELL DIST.

A TV SPORTS PUBLICATION

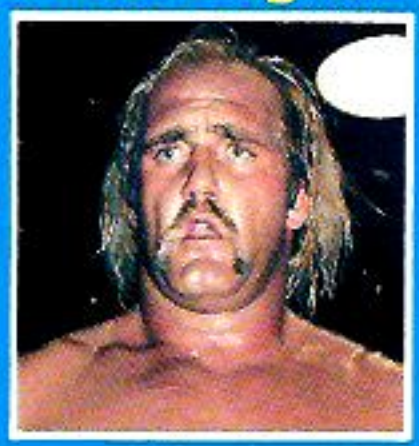
Wrestling 86

A SIZZLING NO-HOLDS-BARRED INTERVIEW 86 WITH WWF HEAD VINCE McMAHON

McMahon on McMahon: "I AM THE WALT DISNEY OF WRESTLING"

McMahon on Hulk Hogan:

"HE'S BURNING HIMSELF OUT"



McMahon on Snuka:

"A BASKET CASE"

McMahon on Ric Flair:

"I JUST DON'T THINK HE CAN MEASURE UP TO HOGAN"

64

0 71572 04853

NEWSLINE

PUGILISTIC PIPER?

There have been several newspaper stories around the country recently regarding the possibility of—yes, of "Rowdy" Roddy Piper retiring from wrestling and becoming a professional boxer.

The most recent, published in the Massachusetts *Patriot Ledger*, quoted Piper as saying that boxing manager Lou Duva wanted him to box, and that he'd love to fight International Boxing Federation heavyweight champion Michael Spinks.

"They wanted me to fight a one-round exhibition against Mike Tyson in New York in conjunction with the Statue of Liberty celebration," the *Patriot Ledger* quoted Piper as saying, "but I couldn't do it. They asked me only a week and a half before it was supposed to take place. There wasn't enough time to get ready."

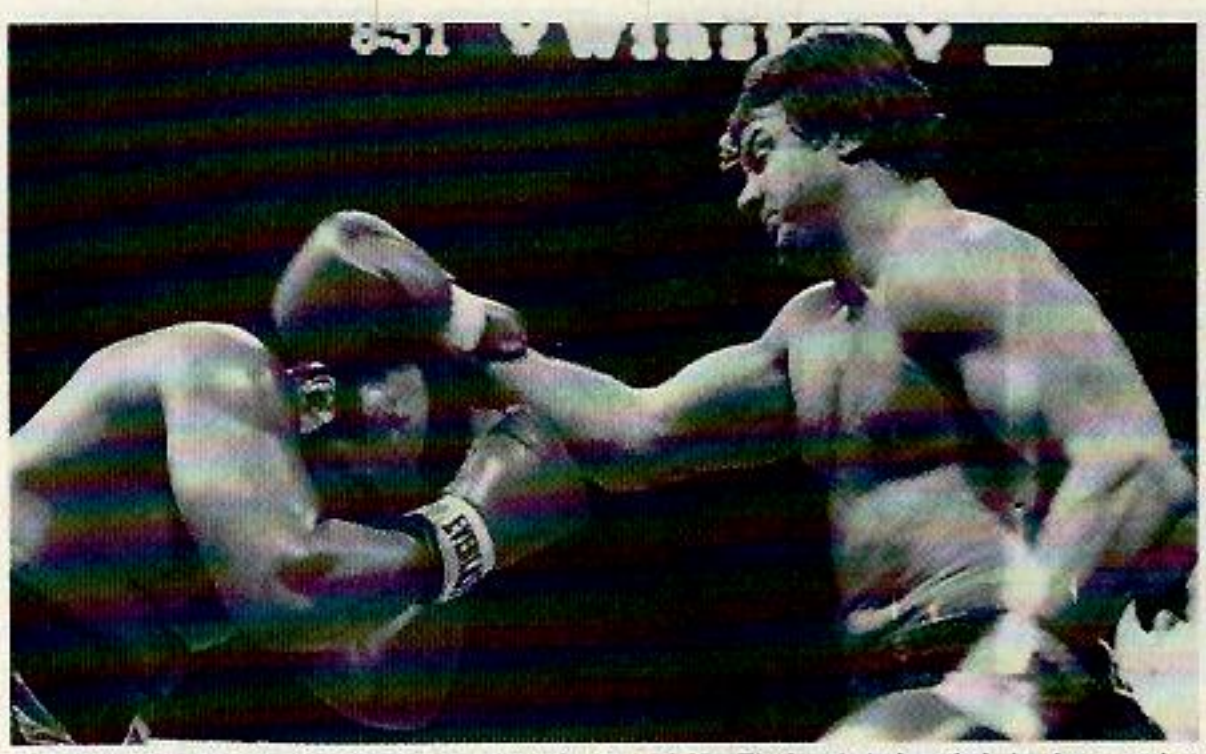
In preparation for his WrestleMania 2 boxing match with Mr. T last April 7 (which ended in the fourth round when Piper was disqualified for shoving referee Jack Lotz and subsequently bodyslamming Mr. T), Piper sequestered himself in training with Duva for over two months.

Wrestling 86 contacted Duva for further insight into the situation.

"If he had to start from the bottom and work his way through a boxing career," Duva said, "I would say no, he couldn't do it because of his age [Piper is 32]. But for one fight, against someone like Donnie Long, Jose Ribalta, or Renaldo Snipes, I wouldn't be afraid to put him in. He can punch so damn hard that he could get lucky and knock one of these guys out. He can punch like hell and I could teach him the basics."

Although Long, Ribalta, and Snipes are generally regarded in boxing circles as marginally talented, fading fighters, Duva is quick to point out that he was impressed by Piper's training skills in the weeks and months before WrestleMania 2.

"I was serious when I said he should box," Duva noted. "He worked with us in camp for three weeks before Tyrell Biggs fought Jeff Sims, and he showed a lot of desire. He's very hyperactive. He ran hard and trained hard and ate with the guys, and they all got along with him great. Boxing is like a love of his.



A Roddy Piper right cross brushes against the top of Mr. T's head during their boxing match at WrestleMania 2. Boxing manager Lou Duva feels that Piper has dynamite in his fists and could make a career as a professional prizefighter.

"Wrestling is his thing, and I don't think he should ever be taken away from wrestling completely. But if he wants to take a vacation from it, I'd be glad to work with him."

It's unlikely that Piper will forsake the wrestling ring for the boxing ring soon, however. A verbal scuffle between Piper and Adrian Adonis regarding who should host the Piper's Pit/Flower Shop interview segment on WWF television broadcasts points to a feud between the two grapplers that won't soon be settled.

A WOMAN'S FICKLENESS

They say that it is a woman's prerogative to change her mind. If that maxim is indeed true, then Baby Doll is more of a woman than anyone could have imagined—particularly Dusty Rhodes.

During a Dusty Rhodes-Ric Flair match on August 17 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Baby Doll (for many months known as Dusty's "personal") came to the ring with Rhodes as usual. But the fans who thought she was there to support "The American Dream" had quite a surprise coming!

When Dusty had Flair down for a pin, Baby Doll reached into the ring and placed Flair's foot on the rope, preventing a pinfall count. Minutes later, when Flair had Rhodes in a figure-four leglock, and Dusty tried to reverse it, Baby Doll reached through the ropes and helped Flair maintain the leverage needed to counter the attempted reversal. Several minutes after that, Baby Doll grabbed a chair and tried hitting Dusty with it. She missed, but seconds later Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard ran into the ring and used the chair to beat Rhodes nearly unconscious.

One has to wonder what is going on in the mind of Baby Doll. Once again she has shifted her allegiance—and this time shafted Dusty Rhodes.

And now, Baby Doll has been appearing on interviews with Flair.

"Dusty was the champ, but he proved he was a loser," Baby Doll told *Wrestling 86*. "I only stick with

winners. Slick Ric is a winner, just like the rest of the Horsemen."

Baby Doll is charting a track record of fickleness that may be unsurpassed anywhere in the sport's history. She began her career in the summer of 1984 as a bodyguard for Gino Hernandez. Around Christmas of that year, wooed by dozens of gifts (including several solid gold bracelets and an automobile), she left Gino in favor of Tully Blanchard. About a year later, she joined up with Dusty Rhodes and became his "personal." And now she's in the camp of The Four Horsemen.

Perhaps more important than Baby Doll's allegiance is the fate of the man she has been bringing to ringside, The Warlord. A young, inexperienced, no doubt impressionable rookie, The Warlord may well figure into some plans that J.J. Dillon and the Horsemen have for him.

When asked about The Warlord, Dillon simply told *Wrestling 86* that he had "no comment," except for that fact that he was "happy that the girl [Baby Doll] finally came to her senses."

SNUKA'S RETURN!

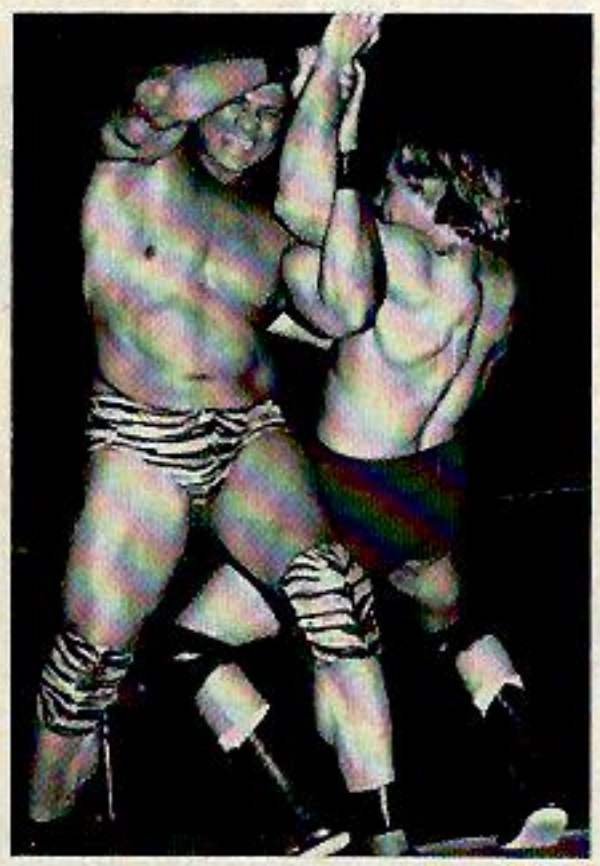
In the September 1986 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, a sidebar to the "SuperCards '86" cover story profiled Jimmy Snuka at WrestleRock '86 and posed the question: Is a full-time AWA stint next?

The answer to that question, clearly, has been "yes," and Snuka's return to full-time action has been welcomed by wrestling fans everywhere.

And while a shot at the AWA World heavyweight title is certainly in the back of Snuka's mind, his most immediate concerns are Larry Zbyszko and Col. DeBeers.

"Zbyszko, brother, is a man of consummate evil," Snuka told *Wrestling 86*. "He is procuring the sacredness of the martial arts and utilizing them for his own nefarious dreams, dreams that will result not in the title and glory that he hungers for, but in self-destruction and pain.

"As for DeBeers, this individual is a man who is poisoned to the depths of his very soul. His being is contaminated by the irrationalities of hatred for his fellow man, a hatred that has no basis in the fact of reality, and no sense of the love and unity that man should have for his fellow man."



Jimmy Snuka passes his test of strength with Larry Zbyszko. The former WWF star has a bright future ahead of him in the AWA.

Yes, Jimmy Snuka is back!

RANDOM NOTES

In the wake of his vicious attack of **Hulk Hogan**, "Mr. Wonderful" **Paul Orndorff** (now officially managed by **Bobby Heenan**) has been receiving several title shots against "The Hulkster." Oddsmakers have installed Orndorff as a 5-2 underdog to defeat Hogan for the title—the best odds any contender has enjoyed since **Randy Savage** first challenged Hogan last year . . . **Strong Machine** has joined his partners **Giant Machine** and **Super Machine** in the WWF, and they are slated to wrestle **John Studd** and **King Kong Bundy**. Those should be some monumental battles! . . . **Ronnie Garvin** has announced that he will retire if he is unable to win the National title from **Tully Blanchard**. Garvin says he will give himself until the end of 1986 to accomplish the task . . . **Dick Murdoch** is wrestling in the NWA, and judging from the cheers he's receiving, "Capt. Redneck" is more popular than ever! . . . **Stan Hansen** captured the All-Japan International title when he defeated **Jumbo Tsuruta** via pinfall in Tokyo . . . **Bruiser Brody** is feuding violently with **Abdullah the Butcher** throughout the World Class area . . . **Bam Bam Bigelow** continues to impress fans in the Mid-Southern area. The 390-pounder uses the flying bodypress, is able to dropkick, and has defeated two opponents in handicap matches by bearhugging both of them *simultaneously!* . . . **Kamala** is now wrestling in the WWF . . . The feud between **Dark Journey** and **Missy Hyatt** continues to dominate the news in the UWF. Hyatt's constant interference in matches involving **Eddie Gilbert**, **Sting**, **John Tatum**, and **Jack Victory** has Journey admittedly worried. She tells us that she has new plans for Hyatt and her men, but she is unwilling to reveal them at this time . . . **Col. DeBeers** continues to claim that **Scott Hall** needs a urine test before wrestling every match. DeBeers accuses Hall of using steroids; Hall denies the charge . . . **The Kansas Jayhawks**, comprised of **Bobby Jaggers** and **Dutch Mantel**, have been wrestling well in NWA matches against **Ivan** and **Nikita Koloff** and **Krusher Khrushchev**—and Mantel's bullwhip has proven to be an effective counter to the Russians' chain! . . . It's About Time Dept.: Finally, the World Class area will have tag team champions again. A tournament is scheduled for Labor Day to fill the championship, which has been vacant for nearly a full year! Teams slated to appear include **Mike** and **Kevin Von Erich**, **The Youngbloods**, **The Battens**, **Buzz Sawyer** and **Matt Borne**, and **Bruiser Brody** and **Lance Von Erich**.

THE LAST WORD

Capt. Lou Albano who, attending a convention of RALPH (**R**oyal **A**ssociation for the **L**ongevity and **P**reservation of *The **H**oneymooners*) in New York City on August 23, received the opportunity to play Ralph Kramden, the part made famous in *The Honeymooners* by Jackie Gleason: "It's a good thing they didn't have Fabulous Moolah playing Alice Kramden—then I really *would* have sent her *bang!—zoom!*—to the moon!" □

IN THIS CORNER

By Craig Peters

ADDING CONFUSION TO THE CONFUSING WORLD OF WRESTLING

THE WORLD OF wrestling is a constantly changing, ever controversial one. And while this column is usually devoted to a single topic, I've seen a lot of important developments take place lately in the sport. So this issue, I have several points I would like to address in this space.

•

The AWA World heavyweight title is the focus of a great deal of controversy right now. On June 29, in Denver, AWA World champion Stan Hansen was scheduled to wrestle contender Nick Bockwinkel. Hansen arrived at the arena, left, and the match never took place. The title was awarded to Bockwinkel by default. Hansen left shortly thereafter for a lengthy tour of Japan.

Before Hansen arrived in Tokyo, AWA President Stanley Blackburn sent telegrams to the Japanese sporting press informing them of the default decision. Hansen, arriving in Tokyo with the AWA belt, told the press there, "I am the champion because I still have the championship belt. I am the champion until I lose the belt to someone *in the ring.*"

Several Japanese promoters are recognizing Hansen's claim to the AWA title. In the U.S., however, Blackburn's decision stands and Bockwinkel is regarded as champion. In effect, there are now *two* AWA World champions. Or, more to the point, there are two AWA champions—the "world" status of that title is being severely threatened by this controversy.

Japanese promoters are attempting to sign a Bockwinkel-Hansen unification match to clear up the confusion, but thus far negotiations have been difficult at best. Hansen is willing, but Bockwinkel claims such a match is unnecessary.

A similar situation occurred back in 1963. Lou Thesz defeated Buddy Rogers in Toronto, Canada, for the NWA World title. For a multiplicity of reasons, several promoters, including Vince McMahon Sr. and Willie Gilzenberg, chose not to recognize the title change. And because of the controversy, McMahon and Gilzenberg broke away from the NWA and formed the World Wide Wrestling Federation (since shortened to World Wrestling Federation), of which Rogers was declared the first champion.

Are we seeing the same thing happening now in the AWA? Perhaps. But the AWA today is hardly as powerful as the NWA was in the early '60s. If such a split does occur over the Hansen-Bockwinkel situation, it might leave the AWA too crippled to continue.

Wrestling fans are always debating the question of which champion can beat which champion, which federation is better than the next, and so on. In my own experience, I've seen a lot of mail concerning our own Top 10 ratings. The question usually is: Why is Ric Flair rated number one and not Hulk Hogan? Hulk beats all the competition he faces, he's beaten the best, he deserves to be number one.

Okay, I'll admit Hulk is good. But I want you to look at a specific statement made by WWF head Vince McMahon in this issue's "Interview 86." McMahon is asked by interviewer Larry King about Hogan's title defense schedule:

KING: How many nights a year will he fight, will he wrestle?
McMAHON: Oh, I would say, on an average out of a year, probably 50, and that's a very, very tough pace.
KING: Once a week.
McMAHON: About once a week, yes.

Anybody who follows wrestling knows that Ric Flair will defend his NWA World title 50 times not in the course of a year, but during an average two months! And that, to me, is really the main reason why Flair is number one in our Top 10 and Hogan isn't—300 title defenses per year as opposed to 50. And *that,* Mr. McMahon, is what a "very, very tough pace" is all about.

•

Thumbs up to the WWF for what appears to be a new trend in its promotional attitude. No, they are not forcing Adrian Adonis to discard his dress. They're not preventing Jake Roberts from bringing his snake to the ring, nor are they taking the mask off of (Andre the) Giant Machine.

But what they *are* doing is promoting several rulebreaker vs. rulebreaker tag team matches. A recent Boston match saw The Hart Foundation take on The Iron Sheik and Nikolai Volkoff, while Philadelphia hosted a Sheik and Volkoff vs. Dory Funk Jr. and Jimmy Jack Funk bout. And we hear that more rulebreaker vs. rulebreaker matches are in the works.

Good work, WWF. Does this mean that a Hogan-Steamboat or a Savage-Roberts match is in the future? I hope so.

Craig Peters is Managing Editor of this magazine.

MANAGER'S FORUM

By Paul Ellering

PAUL ELLERING:
THE KILLER INSTINCT IS NOT DEAD

I ANTICIPATE THAT my return to this space will be greeted with a little more respect from the fans than it was last time. As you may recall, at the time of my last appearance in "Manager's Forum," I had experienced a slight falling out with The Road Warriors, but that has long since been cleared up.

While paging through the Winter 1983 issue of *Wrestling 83*, the inaugural edition of this publication, two things struck me as interesting. One was the tag team ratings. I noted with pride that only two of that issue's Top 10 tag teams have remained ranked. The Road Warriors are one. This is a credit to the incredible endurance and stability of our organization.

The other was the "Opening Bell" column, in which Editor-in-Chief Stu Saks spoke of the changing market structure in professional wrestling and the need for a magazine such as this. Having had a more than fair education in the field of marketing, I can say that Mr. Saks was accurate in noting that "wrestling is quickly becoming a national sport" and "the needs of the sport's fans are changing as quickly." This knowledge of the ever-changing demographics of the sport have resulted in the second-largest selling magazine in the world, behind *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

Precious Paul Ellering, a two-time Manager of the Year, takes exception to the story in *Inside Wrestling* that poses the question: Have The Road Warriors lost their killer instinct?

When-then editors of *Wrestling 83* asked me to author the first-ever "Manager's Forum" column, I had little idea of what to write about until I sat down and composed what I believe to be a story that is as true now as it was then. This time, however, I personally contacted the editorial board of *Wrestling 86* and requested space in this issue.

Let me expound upon my reasons for such a request. I was in the initial reviewing stages of an advance copy of the October 1986 issue of *Inside Wrestling*, a sister publication of this magazine, when I came upon a feature article that, quite honestly, nearly knocked me off my chair.

The story in question was headlined, "The Road Warriors: Have They Lost Their Killer Instinct?" Because there is a set order to my daily reading habits, I did not read the article at this time and was able to regain my composure. Three pages later, however, I happened upon an even more shocking bit of information: My Road Warriors, who had held the top spot in the tag team ratings for 22 consecutive months, were now ranked number three.

Usually, when reviewing the magazine, I will page cover to cover, selecting articles to examine at a later time. In this instance, however, I immediately telephoned Hawk and Animal and requested their presence in my office. Upon their arrival, I distributed copies of *Inside Wrestling*, not realizing what their reaction would be. I will not delve into detail, only to say that I never imagined how many pieces a 68-page periodical could be torn into.

The overtone of the article clearly suggests that The Road Warriors have, indeed, lost their killer instinct. Hawk, Animal, and I take exception to this entirely untrue assertion. Several questions are posed in this story and I will try to answer each one in the space remaining.

"Why would Paul Ellering split his team up to face Flair in singles matches?"

The officials of the NWA approached me with the opportunity to send my men against Ric Flair for the World championship, certainly a tremendous honor. Just as one does not refuse an audience with the Queen, one does not turn down an opportunity to go after the most prestigious singles title in the world. And may I point out that either Hawk or Animal would be wearing the belt if not for some very questionable decisions by referee Tommy Young.

"Secondly, the Warriors are co-holders of the NWA six-man title (along with Dusty Rhodes). So why are they involved in only one title match out of five cards?"

Because of the makeup of The Bash, it was quite an achievement just to schedule one six-man title defense. Of the 14 Bash cards, Dusty, Animal, and Hawk were involved in seven singles matches against Flair. We defended the six-man belts on two occasions, not one. This left five possible cards, but conflicting obligations of the challengers precluded us from scheduling additional matches.

"And maybe the biggest question of all: Why didn't Paul Ellering, one of the most brilliant strategists in the sport, press for a series of matches against NWA World tag team champs The Midnight Express?"

Yes, it is is entirely true that we had spent much of the previous months wearing down The Midnight Express for a final assault during The Bash. But scheduling, as described above, and The Midnight Express' obligation to aid manager Jim Cornette in his silly and sophomoric feud against Baby Doll made even one match impossible. This angered Animal, Hawk, and myself because we felt that we had The Midnight Express on the ropes. It had nothing to do with a lack of killer instinct.

In answer to a few other questions: We travel to Japan in order to sharpen our skills and broaden our range of experience against teams that are equal to, if not better than, their American counterparts. The Road Warriors have yet to lose, and remain the singularly most popular team in Japan.

The Road Warriors will never lose their killer instinct. We are ready to do anything and everything to win the NWA World tag team belts and will not stop short of our goal. Animal and Hawk are the most determined, talented, and physically imposing wrestlers in the world. With the mind of this "brilliant strategist" (your words, not mine) leading them, they will capture the title before the year is out and carry the belts well into the late 20th century.□

LARRY ZBYSZKO

Almost everyone in the sport of wrestling has deep respect for Senior Editor Bill Apter. Associate Editor Eddie Ellner is an exception. He doesn't care for Apter or his views on professional wrestling. Each issue, these two editors will grill a wrestler about hot issues in his career, catching the grappler in the CROSSFIRE! The unedited transcript follows

BILL APTER: Larry, this is a very timely interview now that your long-time nemesis, Nick Bockwinkel, has captured the AWA title.

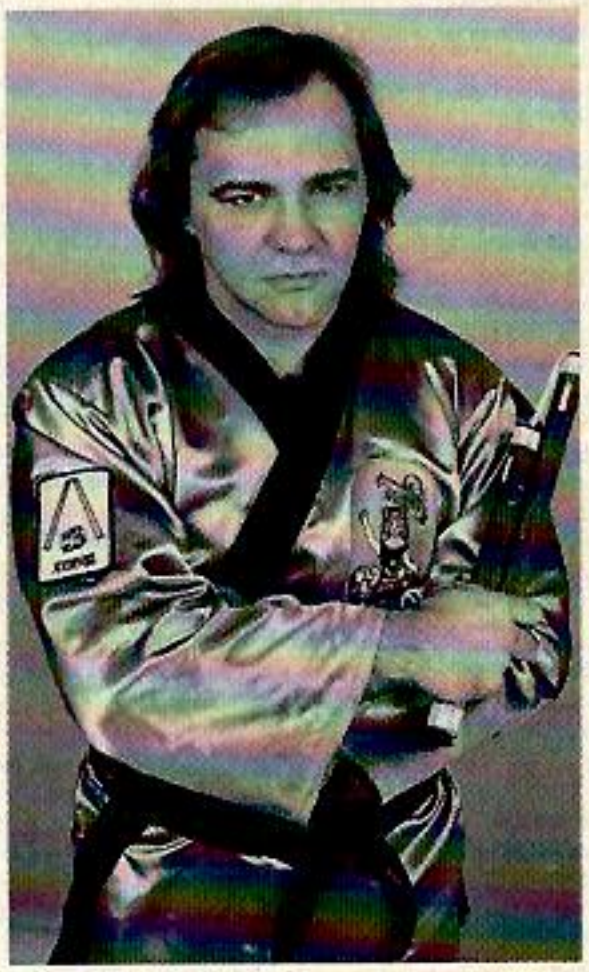
EDDIE ELLNER: *Excuse me, Billiam. Now that Stan Hansen was robbed of the AWA title is the correct way of describing the set of jaundiced circumstances that allow Nick Bockwinkel to possess the AWA title.*

LARRY ZBYSZKO: Right, right you are. After I beat Bockwinkel, I'm toying with the idea of retiring the belt. Hansen was always a good friend to me. He deserves a better fate than to have his hard-earned title be given to that creepy fossil. Nick Bockwinkel is just an old man who doesn't deserve to be champion. The fact that he's got the title is like a fantasy; the fact that I'll soon have the title is reality.

BA: Bockwinkel has never forgiven you for the brutal, uncalled for beating you gave him with your nunchakus.

EE: *Excuse me, Bill. For that inspired,* ***legal*** *pasting you issued Bockwinkel in your Texas death, all-rules-are-abandoned match, I don't believe Bockwinkel will ever invite you out for sushi. Correct?*

LZ: No, but please invite Bockwinkel over so I can complete the business I left unfinished last year. I should have killed him. Who would have cared? His children would have thanked me after the life insurance was paid and the estate settled. He has no fans. And all of his peers are either dead themselves or in old age homes, with Cream of Wheat dribbling down their bibs. It's embarrassing that Bockwinkel has the title. But that's what happens when your best friend is president of the AWA. Stanley Birdbrain should be dead, too.



Larry Zbyszko is a former Americas champion, a black belt, and one of the most outspoken men in the sport of wrestling.

BA: Didn't part of your martial arts training teach restraint? I thought that karate taught violence as a last resort.

LZ: You are so damn naive, Bill. Next thing I know you'll be asking me if there's any chance of me reconciling with the Prince of Spaghetti, Bruno Sammartino. Pro wrestling is about survival. The more tools you possess, the better your chances of survival. Given the same skills as myself, Bockwinkel wouldn't hesitate to inflict more and sadistic types of carnage. He's an animal. Have you all forgotten the career he built before this latest change of philosophy? The man is responsible for some of the most violent ring acts in history.

EE: *Although nothing could surpass your attack on him. That was violence at its purest.*

LZ: Thank you.

BA: Do you like being called the Roddy Piper of the AWA?

LZ: Do you like being called the ferret-faced fuzzwart of the magazine industry? I am more creative than Roddy Piper, more glib, more articulate, more intelligent, and better looking. And I wrestle. Piper hasn't wrestled in months. Instead he "boxes" against morons like Mr. T. Don't ever compare me to Roddy Piper. Never insult me like that. I set the standards in this industry.

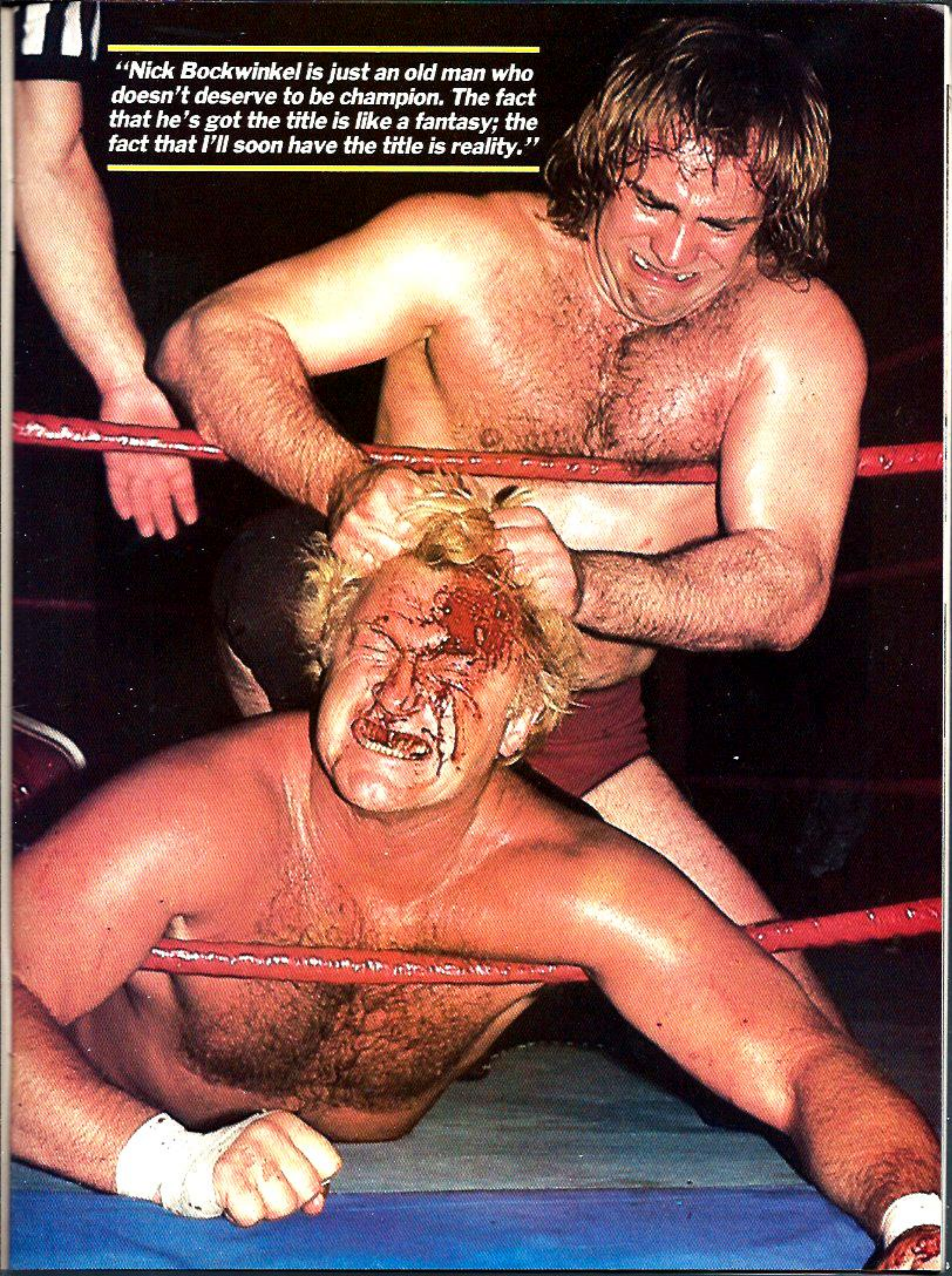
EE: *So there's no chance the bright TV lights of fame could ever diminish your love for the ring? After all, Piper was a very creditable wrestler before his talk show began to dominate his time.*

LZ: NO WAY! I'm bred to brutalize, nurtured to neutralize. My talk show is a nice vehicle. It pays well. It is well-received because of how starved all the fans are for real personalities. But after all is said and done, though, I'm a wrestler. Not a manager. Not a TV personality. A wrestler. The best there is, incidentally.

BA: If you're the best wrestler there is, why have you never been able to capture a world title?

LZ: Because it hasn't been important to me.

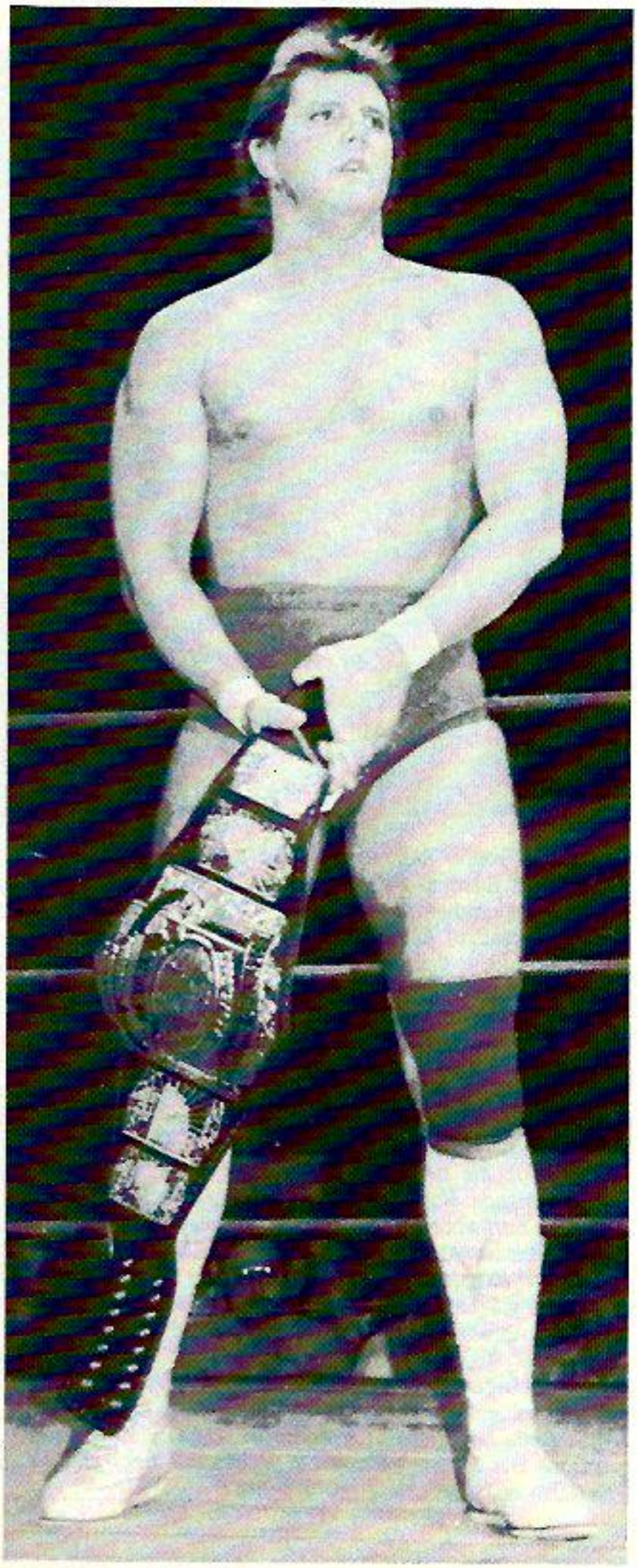
(Continued on page 58)



"Nick Bockwinkel is just an old man who doesn't deserve to be champion. The fact that he's got the title is like a fantasy; the fact that I'll soon have the title is reality."

SCOUTING REPORT

Avid wrestling fans, like the wrestlers themselves, keep close tabs on the career progress of their favorite stars. As a service to our readers, *Wrestling 86* invites you to clip this page, save it, and compare this issue's "Scouting Report" with those of future featured wrestlers



CHRIS ADAMS

SPEED: Gentleman Chris Adams is not fast in a traditional sense, but instead relies on bursts of speed to catch an opponent off-guard. He can execute his superkick, one of the most lethal weapons in all of professional wrestling, with lightning quickness to win a match in an instant. Perhaps the best analogy is to a guard in basketball: Adams works in stops and starts, controlling the tempo of a match and setting up his moves in preparation for a sudden ending. He rarely telegraphs his moves and can be extremely difficult to defend against. **A+**

STRENGTH: At 230 pounds, Adams is the lightest man in the World Class Top 10 and the second-lightest heavyweight champion in our ratings. (Continental kingpin Wendell Cooley is the lightest at 220 pounds.) Although Adams is not a weak man by any means—he maintains a strict daily training regimen—he does not measure up well against the strong men of World Class Wrestling and is having a hard time dealing with the power of current contender Abdullah the Butcher. **C**

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE: Adams' judo background is virtually unparalleled. His martial arts training, unusual for a native of Stratford-on-Avon, England, provides him with superb mobility, a widely varied attack, and a most devastating maneuver in the superkick. The depth of Adams' ring savvy is often all he needs to overcome a bigger, stronger opponent. This has been most apparent in his matches with Rick Rude, perhaps the finest physical specimen in the World Class area. Adams' scientific skills constantly kept Rude on the run and often frustrated the former champion. **A**

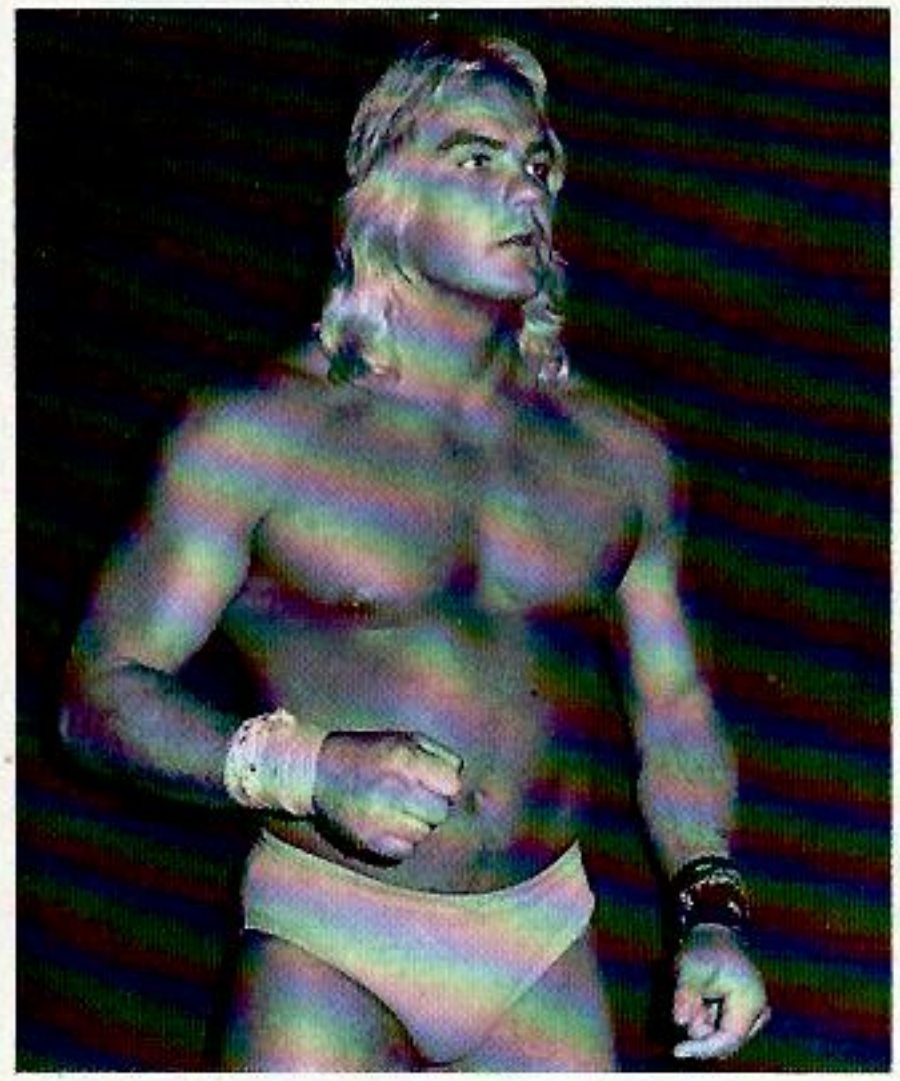
PHYSICAL CONDITION: Make no mistake about it. Chris Adams has been through the ringer. Even before the blinding incident with Gino Hernandez, Adams' body was suffering from the aftershock of a series of punishing matches with Kevin Von Erich, in which he was often the victim of the iron claw. At that time, he was the most hated man in World Class, the enemy of fan favorites and rulebreakers alike. Many say that he still hasn't recovered from that period. Then, of course, there was the blinding. Adams has not completely regained his eyesight and probably never will. His peripheral vision is extremely limited and is a major hindrance in tag team matches, where he is vulnerable to the double-team. And, he still hasn't shed the ring rust after the long recent layoff. **C+**

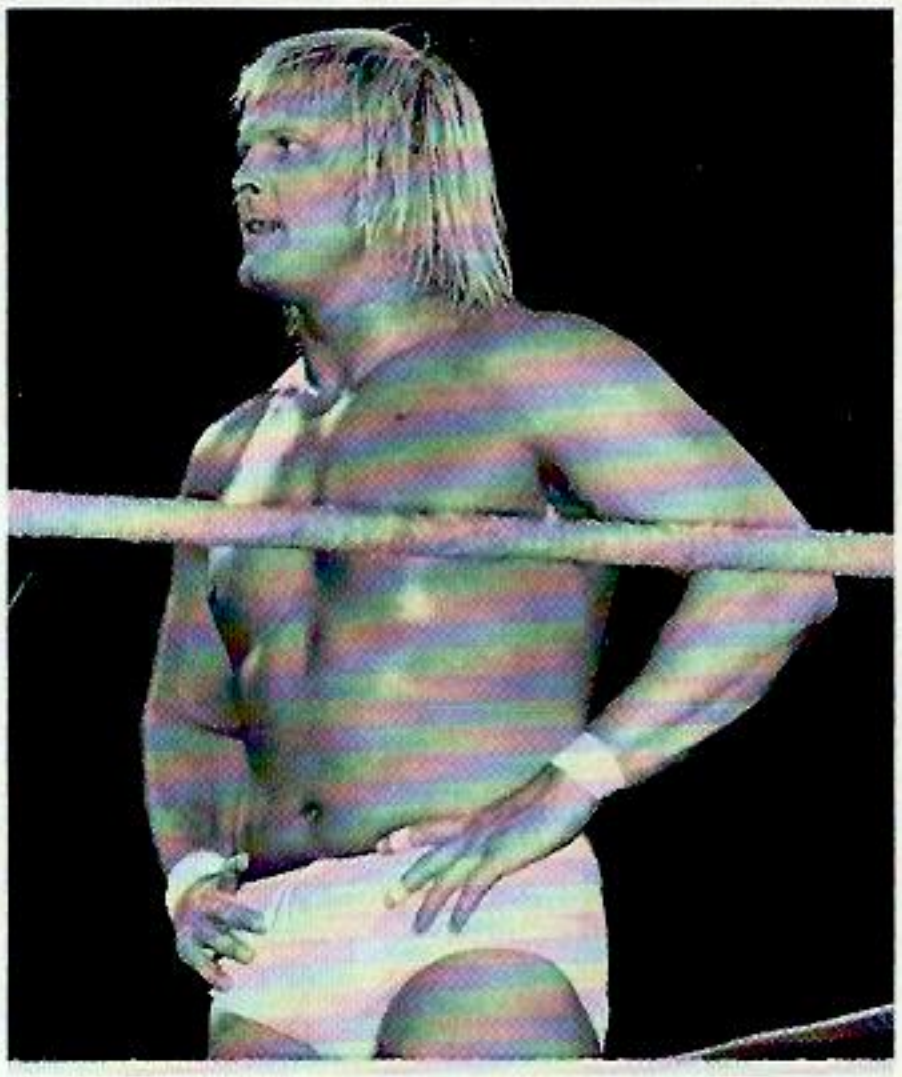
RING INTELLIGENCE: Judging by Adams' current physical condition, it's nothing short of a miracle that he was able to win the World Class title. Attribute this to Adams' nine years of experience in professional wrestling and his ability to work his way out of trouble. Realizing that he is not wrestling at full strength, Adams has revised his game plan to complement his strengths and overcome his weaknesses. He seems to have developed a sixth sense, as many people do when confronted with the loss of sight or hearing. He seems to know an opponent's next move and is ready to retaliate instantly. **A—**

OVERALL GRADE: Adams is in the midst of recovering from a rather stormy three years of his life in which he made enemies with virtually every wrestler in the World Class area, eventually feuded with one of his few friends, tag team partner Gino Hernandez, was nearly permanently blinded, and then watched Hernandez die of a drug overdose. These incidents must have done untold damage to Adams' psyche, but he seems to be getting through it very nicely. Doctors thought that he would never see again, but he managed to regain most of his sight. Then, these same doctors said that he couldn't wrestle. Once again, he defied the odds. Strangely, adversity seems to have made Adams a better wrestler, and now he is defending the World Class heavyweight championship in most honorable fashion. When once it looked as dark as could be, the future certainly looks bright for Gentleman Chris. **B+**

HEAD TO HEAD

BARRY WINDHAM vs. DAN SPIVEY





Wrestling is a sport of savage emotions, intense violence, wild feuds. Sometimes, however, people overlook its human side. When one looks beneath the surface, the men who make their living as professional wrestlers are not, for the most part, wild beasts trained to maim and kill, but real human beings with real feelings and real emotions.

In fact, so often wrestling is analogous to the human feeling of love. In wrestling, two men realize that they are compatible and form a tag team. They grow together as a team, learning each other's moves and building off of each other. Together, they experience wins and losses, thrills and agony, championships and devastation. Their friendship grows deeper. And sometimes, for career reasons or whatever else, the team decides to break up and find new partners. And naturally, the same feelings of resentment that a lover might experience are felt by a professional wrestler.

Such is the case with Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo, former tag team partners who will forever be known as the original U.S. Express. Together, they won the U.S. tag team championship in Florida and were two-time holders of the WWF belts. The match in which they regained the WWF title from Nikolai Volkoff and The Iron Sheik was perhaps the greatest moment in the association of this team.

This story starts in Florida, back in late 1983, when Windham and Rotundo were U.S. tag team champions. Windham discovered two young men named Dan Spivey and Scott Hall and convinced them to become wrestlers. Windham trained both men, teaching them everything he knew, and eventually, Spivey and Hall teamed to become The American Starship.

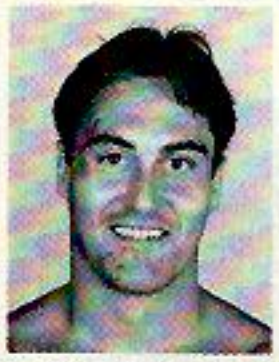
In late 1984, the four men parted ways. The U.S. Express moved on to the WWF, Spivey went to the Mid-Atlantic region, and Hall jumped to the AWA. Rotundo and Windham were a great success in the WWF, but Windham decided to move back to Florida, where Rotundo later joined him.

Their reunion didn't last long, however, as Rotundo soon went back to the WWF. Shortly after, Spivey signed with the WWF, teamed up with Rotundo, and a new U.S. Express was born.

Although the two have parted ways, Rotundo and Windham remain friends. How ironic, however, that Rotundo is now paired with the man whom his ex-partner discovered and trained. Trading off on their name, the new U.S. Express are calling themselves The American Express. While Windham insists that there was and is only one U.S. Express—Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo—Windham also insists that he harbors no bad feelings toward Spivey.

Despite this, one has to be intrigued by the possibility of a match between Barry Windham and Dan Spivey: the teacher vs. the former student, Rotundo's ex-partner vs. his current partner, an epic battle between two scientific wrestlers, which fascinated us and the four experts we asked to analyze this match and decide a possible outcome.

HEAD TO HEAD



MIKE ROTUNDO

Right off the bat, I might as well say that I'm not too crazy about answering this question. Barry is still a very good friend of mine. As for Danny, well, we're doing pretty well together and I wouldn't want to break up the chemistry. I usually shoot straight from the hip, but in this case, I think I'd serve the purpose better if I gave two scenarios: one in which Danny would win and the other in which Barry would win.

Barry is one of the finest wrestlers in the world. I don't think anybody would doubt that. He has tremendous strength and speed, and he has the rare ability to brawl it out or wrestle scientifically. Barry isn't as big as Danny, but he has much more experience and, I think, a wider range of abilities. Experience is the key, though, because Barry still knows how to get out of certain situations and he really has the killer instinct. He gets that from his father. And that bulldog headlock of his is deadly.

Danny, of course, learned everything he knows from Barry. He's a little younger than Barry, so he still has that youthful enthusiasm, which could be a big key. There's probably not another man in the world who has wrestled Barry and Danny as much as I have—in practice, of course—and the first time I met Danny, I was very surprised. The guy has tremendous ability, and I wouldn't have taken him on as a partner if he didn't. I was especially impressed by the way he used his size. He's a tall man, but he isn't awkward like you'd expect.

I hope it never happens. In fact, I'm sure it will never happen—Barry isn't planning on leaving Florida and I don't think Danny has made plans to leave the WWF. But you're right. It would be a great match and I wouldn't be surprised if it ended up in a draw.

Mike Rotundo teamed with Barry Windham to win the WWF World tag team belts twice in the space of five months in 1985.

J.J. DILLON

I'm amazed that you would even think of asking for my input on a proposed match between two men with such startlingly little ability. What you have presented me with would classify as little more than a preliminary match on any respectable wrestling card.

However, I am a tolerant person and I am impressed that you were able to recognize my vast knowledge of wrestling and ask me to participate in this venture. Therefore, I will comply with your request.

The match in question involves Barry Windham, whom I personally had the pleasure to watch some years back get publicly embarrassed by Ron Bass. On the date in question, Bass saddled up Mr. Windham and rode him around the ring, much in the way a man would ride a burro. From what I can tell, Windham has not progressed much from that time.

As for Spivey, from what I understand, he learned everything he knows from Windham, so I guess that says all we need to know. I also know that Spivey has teamed up with Mike Rotundo in the WWF and they have yet to win the tag team championship. Since I think little of the current tag team competition in that area, this does not speak well for Spivey's ability.

The match itself would be a fiasco, a boring display of unimaginative scientific techniques that would end with one of the wrestlers falling to the mat from exhaustion and the other collapsing on top for the pin. Since Windham developed a little stamina from his days of galloping around as Ron Bass' jackass, I would give him a slight edge.

J.J. Dillon is the manager of Tully Blanchard. He was voted Manager of the Year in 1982 and 1983, one of only two men to have achieved that that honor two years in a row.

GORDON SOLIE

This is one match I would love to see because of the incidentals involved between two wrestlers of rather strikingly similar ability and physical appearance, although, of course, there are some differences between the two which we will deal with during the course of this dissertation.

I have gotten to know Barry Windham quite well as a result of my announcing duties with Buddy Colt on *Championship Wrestling From Florida* and I have always been impressed by his dedication and ring savvy. Young Windham gets in that ring and his ability to work over and weaken the various muscular regions of his opponent's body is virtually unparalleled in the world of professional sports, wrestling in particular.

Mr. Spivey, of course, does not hide the fact that he was discovered and learned almost everything he knows from Barry Windham. I had the pleasure of watching these two men work together and Mr. Spivey seemed to be a very good pupil. He'd take in everything Barry taught, which was a real tribute to Barry, since at the time he had only been in the sport for about five years as a pro.

I know that there have been many cases in sports of a former student coming back to defeat his ex-teacher, but I don't that would happen here. When we speak about Barry Windham, we're talking about one of the exemplary wrestlers in the continental United States, if not the entire world. In the end, Windham's vast experience, speed, and ever-improving skills would wear down Spivey, and I think he'd pin him after about 25 minutes.

Gordon Solie, the dean of wrestling announcers, can currently be seen hosting "Championship Wrestling From Florida" and "Continental Championship Wrestling."

SCOTT HALL

You might as well have asked me to analyze a match between my two brothers. That's how much Barry Windham and Dan Spivey have meant to my wrestling career. There aren't two guys in the world who have had more influence on my life. For one, Barry convinced me to leave basketball and give wrestling a try. Then Barry took me under his wing and gave me every available minute of his time. My debt to him can never be paid.

Spivey, of course, was Eagle when we teamed up as The American Starship and I was Coyote. Though we were both trained by Barry, we both had different interpretations of his instruction. There are subtle, but important, differences in our styles. Still, we made a great team, I thought, and when we broke up, we were still best of friends.

Now you're asking me to analyze a fictitious match between Barry and Danny, and I'll tell you, it's real tough. I guess the first step would be for me to decide how I'd do against Barry, and I think I'd stand a pretty good chance. In fact, I've been facing some pretty tough competition and winning the AWA tag belts with Curt [Hennig] has definitely made me a better wrestler.

I think I'd beat Barry, and I think Danny would, too. You see, Barry knows his own style, and although he's constantly improving, he's stuck within that framework. Danny, and me, too, were born with our own styles, then we were taught Barry's style, and we've both built off that. Danny is a more versatile wrestler than Barry and he also has that slight size advantage. This would be an outstanding scientific match, and you might even see a little good natured, friendly brawling going on. It would be Danny, by pinfall, and it could last a good hour.

Scott Hall, the AWA's number four contender, was trained by Barry Windham and is a former tag team partner of Dan Spivey's.

SCOREBOARD

LEX LUGAR & BARRY WINDHAM vs. KAREEM MUHAMMAD & ED GANTNER

Muhammad slams Windham (above left), drawing an immediate retaliation from Lugar (above right)

Sir Oliver Humperdink is a proud man. Proud of himself, and proud of his "Shock Troops," a 747-pound tag team consisting of Kareem Muhammad and Ed "The Bull" Gantner. With the force of a jumbo jet, The Shock Troops took on the popular duo of Barry Windham and Southern champion Lex Lugar—and the promoter of that recent match in Ft. Myers, Florida, should have provided seat belts for all those on hand to help weather the heavy turbulence.

The war between Lugar and Humperdink's Shock Troops has deep roots. In early June, Lugar was wrestling Ric Flair for the NWA World title in a best-of-three falls match. After Lugar handily took the first fall, Flair inexplicably returned to his dressing room. Humperdink, his Shock Troops, and several masked wrestlers charged the ring, attacked Lugar, and beat him so badly that he could not continue.

During the attack, Barry Windham tried to help Lugar. He was on crutches at the time, and Humperdink's Shock Troops exacerbated his injuries. So this Ft. Myers tag team match was a mission of revenge for not only Lugar, but Windham as well.

Windham and Lugar approached the match with the attitudes of men possessed. Gantner and Muhammad, buoyed by the support of Humperdink at ringside, were unable to match speed with their more athletically inclined opponents and relied on bulk/power moves such as elbowsmashes, legdrops, and powerslams for the basis of their offense.

At one point in the match, the two teams exchanged bodyslams—to the awestruck near-disbelief of the fans.

Muhammad struck first, slamming Windham to the mat with incredible force and stunning Barry to the point where, grabbing his back in pain, he had to tag off and let his partner enter the ring. When Lugar came in, he astounded the crowd by scooping up the 467-pound Muhammad and depositing him to the mat with a thunderous slam. The maneuver was greeted with a roar of applause.

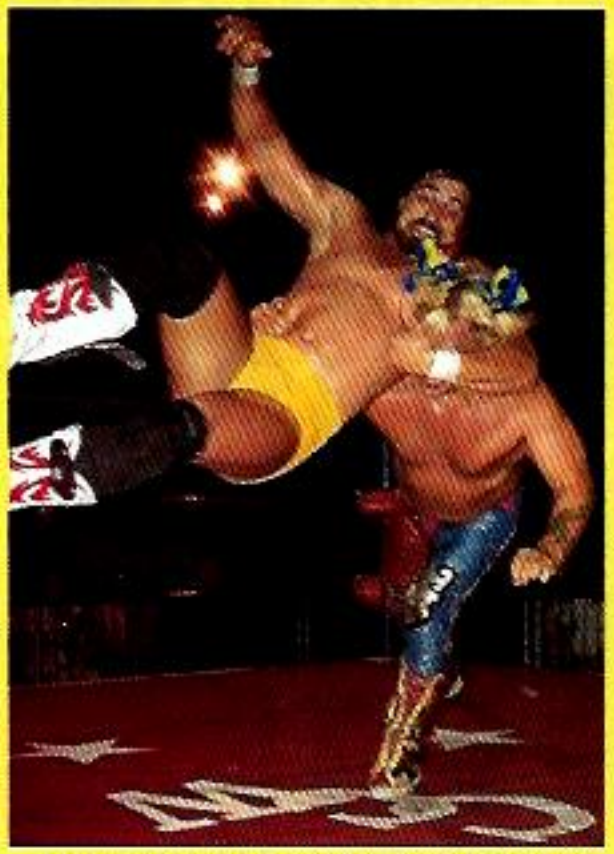
Humperdink's later interference caused the Troops to be disqualified, but the fans weren't really worried about winners and losers—it was Lugar and Windham who impressed them most. In that small measure, a bit of revenge was gained that night.

SCOREBOARD

ADRIAN STREET vs. WENDELL COOLEY

If Hulk Hogan vs. Paul Orndorff is the feud to watch in the WWF, and Magnum T.A. vs. Nikita Koloff is the feud to watch in the World Championship area, undoubtedly the battle in the Continental area that embodies those previous wars' qualities of violence, bitterness, and spite is the conflict between "Exotic" Adrian Street and Wendell Cooley.

At the heart of the feud are the basic differences between flashy stylist and rugged cowboy, European culture and Texas toughness. Also involved is Street's valet, Miss Linda, who was the prize in a Cooley-Street bout some months back. Cooley won her services for a brief time, and during that period attempted to teach Miss Linda how to ride a horse. Linda fell and broke her leg. The injury has caused Street to up the ante of violence in his vendetta against "Wildcat" Wendell.



There's some bulldog in Wendell Cooley

Also at stake: the Southeast heavyweight championship, currently held by Cooley (and formerly held by Street).

The site of many of their most heated battles has been Birmingham, Alabama, and Cooley has been emerging victorious. It seems as if Street's European wrestling tactics simply can't measure up to the toughness demonstrated by Cooley.

But Street is a determined man, willing to place even the well-being of his valet on the line in order to fulfill his desire for victory over Cooley. A future match, just signed as of press time, finds a contractual stipulation stating that Miss Linda will be tarred and feathered should Street lose. Clearly, "Exotic" Adrian feels he finally possesses the key to victory—and that he'll once again hold the Southeast title. Either that or he's taking a tremendous risk.

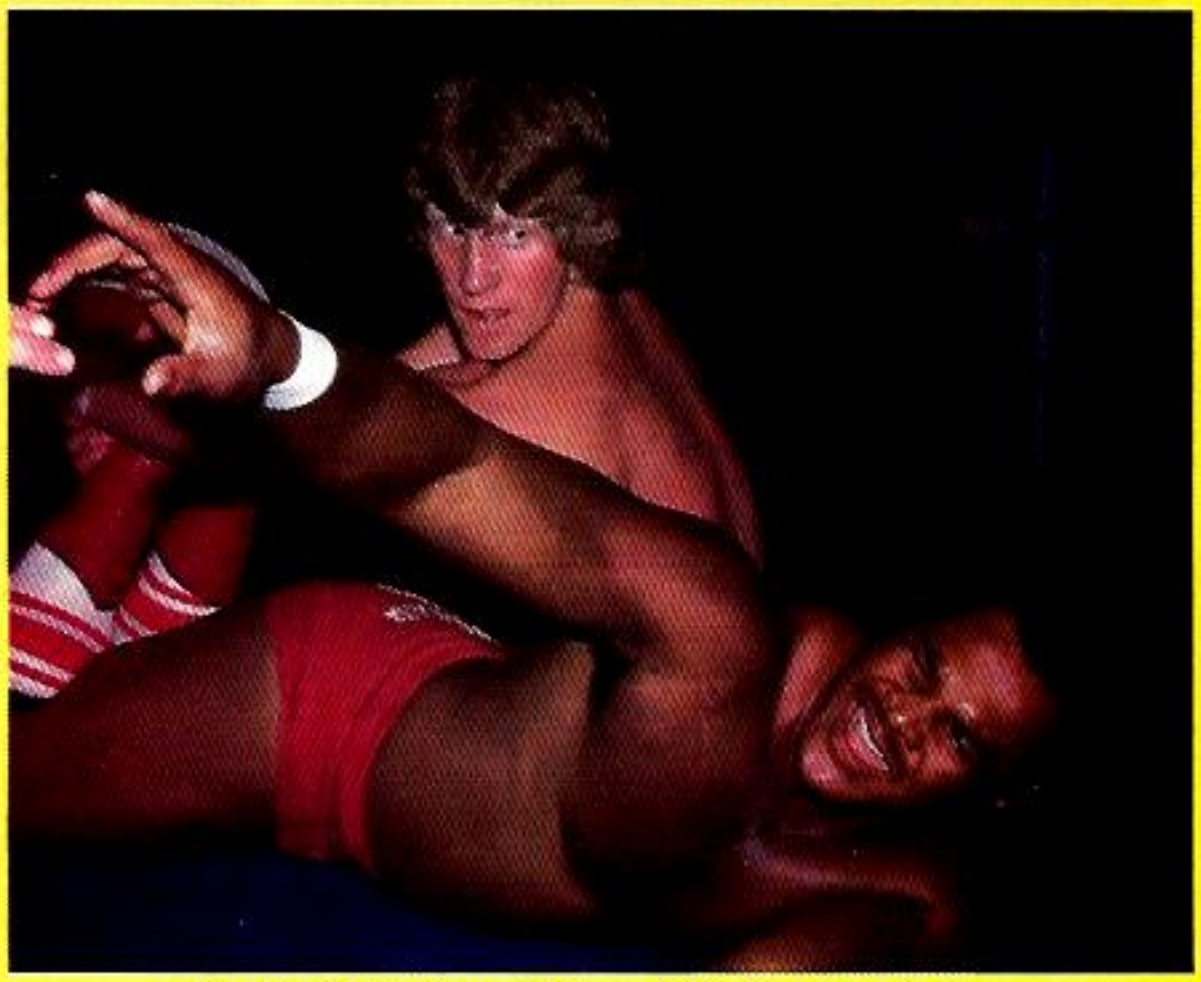
LANCE, KEVIN, & MIKE VON ERICH vs. BUTCH REED, MATT BORNE, & BUZZ SAWYER

On July 4 in the Reunion Arena in Dallas, much more than the Spirit of '76 was being celebrated. Indeed, the very spirit of life itself seemed to be the center of celebration as the occasion marked the return of Mike Von Erich to the wrestling ring.

Mike, who was sidelined for nine months by his near-fatal bout with toxic shock syndrome, joined his older brother Kevin and his cousin Lance to defend their World Class six-man title against the formidable combination of Butch Reed, Matt Borne, and "Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer.

When Mike first stepped through the dressing room doorway, the crowd burst forth in a cacophony of applause. And when Mike held one of the six-man tag team belts over his head, the noise seemed to multiply tenfold. Ringside fans were seen to have been weeping.

The spirit of the fans seemed to act as a fourth tag team member, driving the Von Erichs with an ambition and a sense of purpose that proved to be too much for their challengers.



Mike Von Erich: alive and all-too-well for Butch Reed's taste

Mike was understandably a bit tentative in his wrestling, showing the effects of the ring rust that such a layoff will invariably bring on. Lance went on to pin Borne for the victory for his team. But more than a match victory was celebrated that day in Dallas. Much, much more. Just ask Mike Von Erich.

SCOREBOARD

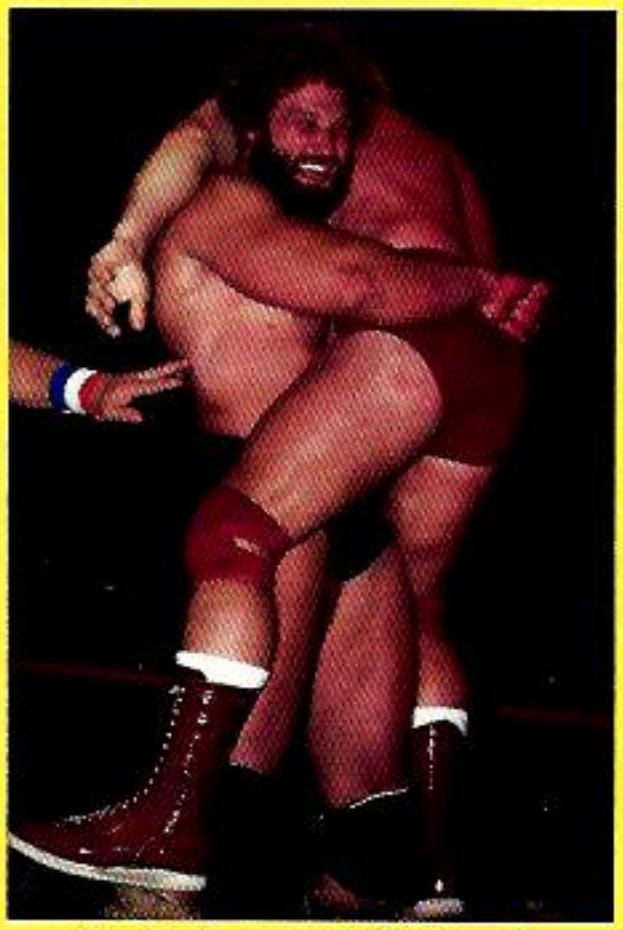
NORD THE BARBARIAN vs. NICK BOCKWINKEL

Nick Bockwinkel has got to be worried. Very worried.

On one hand, he is a champion without a belt and without universal recognition. Stan Hansen, who was stripped of the title when he walked out on a title defense against Bockwinkel in Denver in June, has refused to return the AWA belt. Hansen says he still is AWA champion, and his position is being recognized by some promoters in Japan, where Hansen has made recent "defenses" against Genichiro Tenryu and Jumbo Tsuruta.

(For more on the AWA title situation, see "In This Corner" on page 12 and "You Decide" on page 44.)

On the other hand, and more immediately important to Bockwinkel, there is Nord the Barbarian to contend with. Some AWA observers feel that Nord is too much for the veteran champion, and it is just a matter of time before the second-year wrestler overpowers Bockwinkel and takes the title.



Can Nord squeeze Bockinkel out?

Indeed, Nord seems to be just a contractual stipulation away from achieving his goal. After all, in a non-title match recently in the St. Paul Civic Center, the Barbarian gained a pinfall victory over Bockwinkel after muscling the champion around the ring for nearly 20 minutes.

And that match was hardly a fluke. Nord has gained *several* pinfalls over Bockwinkel in *several* non-title matches.

Nord, who may well be the most improved wrestler of 1986, just needs to receive a series of *title* matches with Bockwinkel, and the title may well be his. Should that happen before the controversy with Hansen is settled, a Nord-Hansen series might be the eventual violent result.

Meanwhile, Bockwinkel has to be thinking long and hard about the way Nord manhandled him in St. Paul and elsewhere. And he's got to be worried.

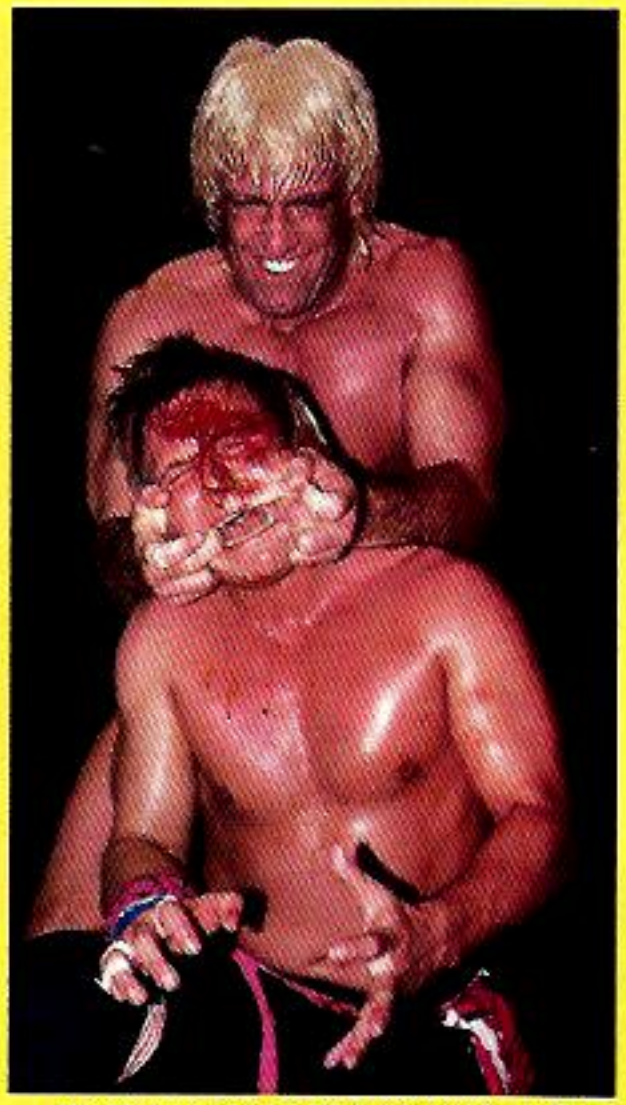
RIC FLAIR & TULLY BLANCHARD vs. THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS

It was only a few days before the first Great American Bash card in Philadelphia, but the mood in Richmond, Virginia, was intense. Perhaps it was the anticipation of the Bashes themselves that added an element of pressure. Or perhaps the level of hatred was so high among the combatants that it didn't matter when or where they met.

In any case, two of the Four Horsemen, NWA World champion Ric Flair and National heavyweight champion Tully Blanchard, waged war with The Rock 'n' Roll Express this day in Richmond. And the results not only presaged the violent events of the Bashes, but also anticipated the post-Bash war between the Express and the Andersons.

It was a Texas Tornado match—all four men were permitted to be in the ring at the same time. The action was wild, with Rick Morton and Robert Gibson employing remarkable high-flying teamwork against their more sure-footed opponents.

A highlight of the bout, for fans and perhaps the wrestlers as well, occurred when Flair and Morton concentrated their attacks on each other. The animosity between the two men needs no additional explanation, and with several NWA World title cage matches slated for the Bashes, each man took this final pre-Bash opportunity to attempt to injure the other and gain a significant physical advantage going into Philadelphia and Bash #1.



Ric Flair works on Rick Morton's smile

If anyone gained that advantage, albeit in a very slight sense, it was certainly Flair. The NWA World champion succeeded in opening a wide gash in Morton's head and, as the Rock 'n' Roller's vision was impaired, proceeded to attempt to wound Morton's face further by grabbing him in the mouth and sadistically pulling his cheeks apart.

Gibson helped break up the attack, and the Express soon gained an advantage. But it would be The Four Horsemen who would once again claim a highly tainted victory as Ole Anderson ran into the ring, interfered, and, with the help of J.J. Dillon (at ringside for Tully), spearheaded a three-on-two attack that necessitated several wrestlers running from the dressing room to come to Morton and Gibson's aid. □

INTERVIEW 86

VINCE McMAHON

*In the April 1986 edition of **Pro Wrestling Illustrated**, we presented a "Press Conference" with NWA promoter Jim Crockett. In the April 1986 edition of **Inside Wrestling** we printed a "Hotseat" interview with UWF President Bill Watts. The October 1986 **Inside Wrestling** offered a "Hotseat" talk with the AWA's Verne Gagne. Now, **Wrestling 86** is proud to present a rare in-depth interview with the most recognizable and controversial man behind the scenes of the sport—WWF head Vince McMahon.*

*McMahon, of course, has been the WWF's five-star general in its ongoing war of expansion. The past four years have seen the WWF promotion become extremely aggressive as large amounts of money have been spent in order to obtain television time and wrestling talent. Concurrently, the WWF itself has grown—from a regional New York-based promotion to a nationwide promotion that, on May 11, 1985, brought wrestling back to network television for the first time in 30 years with the first NBC-aired **Saturday Night's Main Event** program.*

*But with a high degree of visibility comes close examination and criticism, and McMahon certainly has his share of detractors. Many claim that while McMahon has gained unprecedented fame for the sport, he has done so with vaudeville-style gimmicks such as pie fights, the on-air wedding of Uncle Elmer, and the USA cable network "talk show" **TNT**. Others point out that while McMahon's WWF boasts the largest talent roster in the world, most of that talent is stagnating in a federation that regards Adrian Adonis' homosexuality and Jake Roberts' boa constrictor in higher esteem than Rick Steamboat's pure wrestling ability and The British Bulldogs' exceptional teamwork.*

The interview you are about to read was conducted on television live on June 30, 1986, by Larry King on a program called "Home Team Sportsbeat." Home Team Sports is a regional cable network located in Washington, D.C., that offers year-round coverage of major professional and collegiate sporting events in the Mid-Atlantic states. The station's wrestling coverage includes twice-weekly airings of both Florida and UWF wrestling but—ironically—no WWF wrestling. We would like to thank Home Team Sports for their cooperation in allowing us to transcribe the program.

*King is a veteran interviewer who must never sleep. In addition to prolific freelance television, radio, and newspaper work, King regularly writes a column for **USA Today**, hosts a daily one-hour interview show on Ted Turner's Cable News Network, and hosts the nightly "Larry King Live" late-night radio program.*

"I liked him a lot," King said of McMahon. "I never go into an interview with any impression, with any preconception, and I was impressed. I think he's a natural kind of showman. I understand how someone like that can be involved in a phenomenon, and I regard wrestling as a phenomenon. He was a good sport."

KING: Our special guest in this one-hour salute to wrestling is Vince McMahon, the president of the World Wrestling Federation. We'll be taking your phone calls for Vince. How did you get into this?

McMAHON: I got into it really, somewhat as a family affair. My granddad was promoting boxing and wrestling back in New York City, principally in one of the old Madison Square Gardens. And, from there, my dad, having helped his father promote wrestling and, more boxing in those days, putting show cards up and selling tickets and whatever it may be, and sort of got in my father's blood. And, of course, I grew up with the business, so it naturally got in my blood, and I can't get it out. I love it.

KING: When did this boom start? I mean, all of us were kids, we saw wrestling on television, it was always there. Wrestling was always there.

McMAHON: And it always will be there.

KING: Well, obviously, it's a staple. But what's this mania? Did you create that?

McMAHON: I think from a group effort standpoint, yes. One of the reasons that wrestling is so popular—the World Wrestling Federation, I should say, to differentiate that between all wrestling—is so popular is that for years and years there were these small local and regional promoters, and they all worked together. And in order to bring the entertainment value to the sport that we wanted to do, we could no longer remain just a part of that. In order to bring the entertainment value we wanted, the only way we could do it was to be national and indeed international in scope. So that's what we did.

Larry King is at the controls as he and the viewers of *Home Team Sportsbeat* have the opportunity to grill the head of the WWF, Vince McMahon.

KING: Did what?

McMAHON: Well, we began to compete, which had never been done before in professional wrestling.

KING: With?

McMAHON: With all the other promoters. It was us against the world. And all the other regional and local promoters still maintain their alliances and allegiances and I would say perhaps somewhat monopolistic tendencies, and we then decided we're gonna break the mold and we're gonna compete with all of them.

KING: By using prime-time television, nighttime television, NBC, what?

McMAHON: Every vehicle we possibly could use. Cable television, prime time, network television, our own syndicated package—which now we're on in over 200 markets. From every vehicle we possibly could compete.

KING: You treated it globally, then.

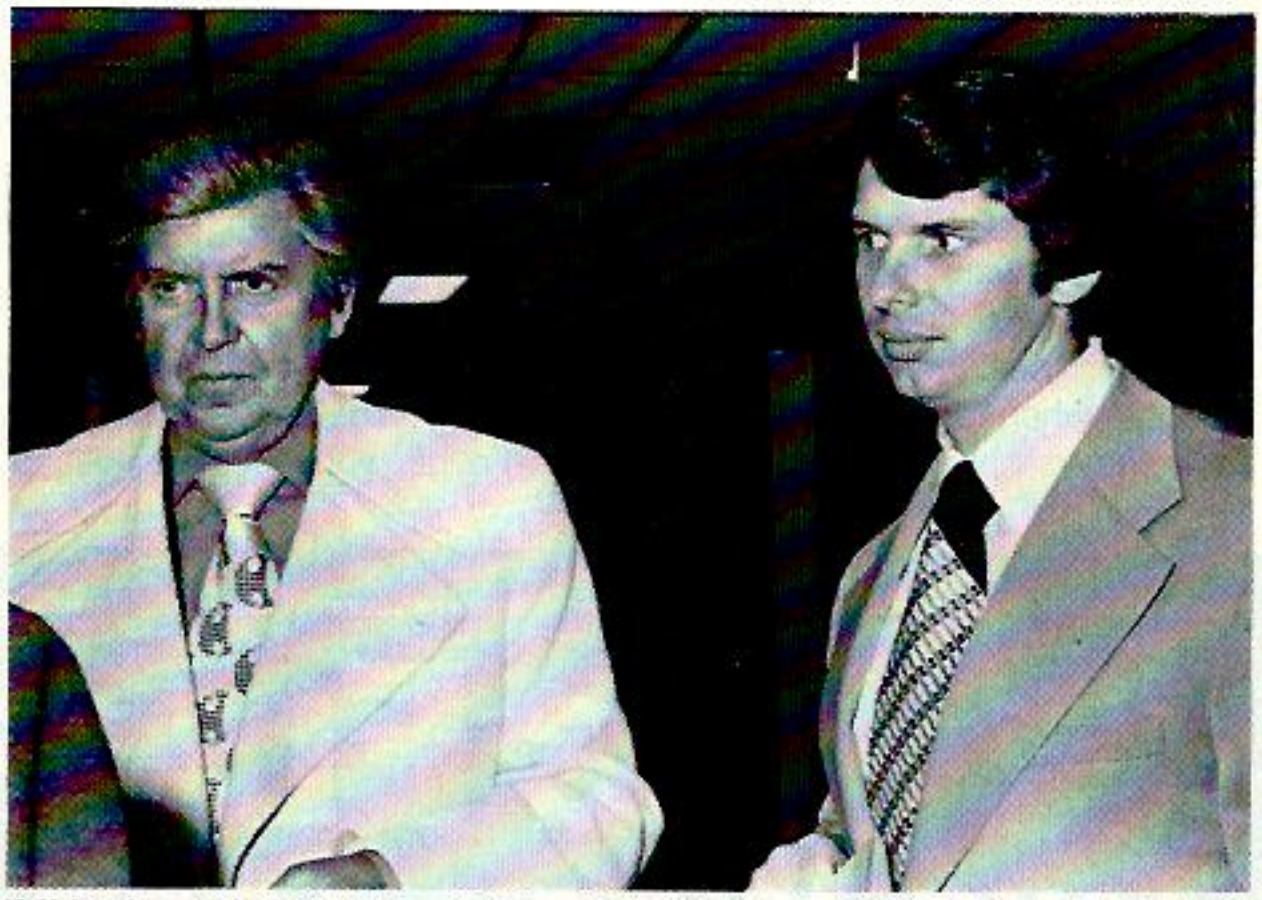
McMAHON: Yes.
KING: How much did Hulk Hogan have to do with this success? Did you need a prime mover, so to speak, an attraction?
McMAHON: I think yes and no. I mean, who is to say? It's very, very successful, it proved to be a very successful formula for us. Hulk is such a charismatic individual, and sets the standards, I think, for all wrestling champions of the future. He helped us greatly, there's no doubt of that. He had to have the vehicle, of course, in order to do that. So we, I think, more than anything else, created the vehicle, and he certainly has helped us. But in no way is this a one man gang, it's not a one-man story at all.
KING: Now what made it—this you can't plan. How did it catch on with rock groups and people dressing up in fancy svelte clothing and going out on Friday night to see and be seen? Can't create that.
McMAHON: I think that again, from an entertainment standpoint, the difference here is, notwithstanding the aggressiveness that we showed in terms of our expansion, the difference is also in terms of philosophy. Our philosophy is really basically the same as any successful owner of a sports franchise, but even more so in that we recognize that we are first and foremost in the entertainment business. We are entertainment producers. And so with that philosophy it's totally different than any philosophy before us in terms of previous wrestling producers. So with that philosophy, then, I think it's the right blend of all sorts of demographics and whatever that makes us so successful.
KING: Were you shocked at it catching on like it did?
McMAHON: No, I wouldn't say that I was shocked at it catching on like it did. As a matter of fact, I think the family jewels were on the line hoping that it would.
KING: In other words, you did roll the dice that it would?
McMAHON: Absolutely.
KING: Betting it on an '80s entertainment kind of thing?
McMAHON: Absolutely.
KING: All right. It is an entertainment first.
McMAHON: Absolutely. Entertainment first and foremost.
KING: Why then do people get angry at you over it being a sport, or for it not being a sport, when you're saying it's an entertainment first? What are you saying?
McMAHON: What I'm saying is that in terms of positioning, and it's a marketing philosophy which no other wrestling producer ever dreamed of or wouldn't say or whatever. What we tried to do, and thank God we were successful in doing it, is position ourselves in a very, very unique format. The World Wrestling Federation is sports entertainment. It has the best of both worlds. It uses extraordinary athletes in terms of their physical prowess to entertain. But yet, from an entertainment spectrum, it then gives us the ability to bring in all sorts of things to rub up against these athletes, and indeed it is sports entertainment.
KING: Are they very well paid?
McMAHON: Yes, they're extremely well paid.
KING: The average top wrestler will earn what?
McMAHON: Well, only in the WWF, I mean I can't say that all wrestlers are well paid, and one of the reasons why they are in the WWF is because of our global scope.
KING: They'll earn what?
McMAHON: Well, I would say a top wrestler in the WWF would earn well over a half a million dollars in terms of all rights.

McMahon is the master of ceremonies for the March 1985 WrestleMania 1 press conference, where Jimmy Snuka confronts Paul Orndorff and Roddy Piper. Whether or not he uses it correctly, McMahon has a true gift for promotion.

KING: The fan who goes to the event, apart from the rock stars and the Bob Costases—who, you know, fell as a young child out of the crib and we don't know who tipped it over—can we tintype, as *Playboy* magazine tries to, the wrestling fan? Is it a he or a she, how old, income, etc.
McMAHON: Again, I think there is a difference between the wrestling fan and a fan of the WWF. From a marketing standpoint, socio-economic background, everything else. But broad-based, I think you have to say that at our live events, as well as the television viewership which Nielsen bears out, that we are Americana. And that's really where our audience . . .
KING: All age groups?
McMAHON: It's all age groups. There's a higher concentration in terms of some demographics, but in general it's all age groups. And it really is Americana.
KING: Split men and women?
McMAHON: Not exactly. I'd say there's a higher skew to men, about 55 percent men.
KING: Okay, let's take our first caller. Hello?
CALLER #1: I have quite a few questions, I don't know where to start first. Why would they allow Jake "The Snake" [Roberts] to go in the ring with the snake?
McMAHON: Well, *there you go again.* That's a good question. Jake has a pet, he has a friend that he brings, and he normally does not bring it into the ring, he's forbidden to bring it into the ring unless the match is over. The match is over, then the sanctioning body of the WWF doesn't have any control over Jake "The Snake." When Jake "The Snake" comes to the ring to wrestle, and more often than not . . . *(turns to Larry King)* He brings a snake, in this great big . . .
KING: A what?
McMAHON: He brings a snake, a python.
KING: Is this in the rulebook?
McMAHON: Well, actually, he's rewriting the rulebook, Jake "The Snake" is, but nonetheless he brings this . . .
KING: For what purpose?
McMAHON: He likes snakes. He uses the snake to intimidate his opponents, and he'll bring the snake . . .
KING: Wade Boggs likes chicken, but he doesn't bring one to the plate when he comes to bat.
McMAHON: Yes, but wait a minute, this is the WWF. Things happen here a little differently than they do anywhere else.
KING: Does the snake often get involved in the actual combativeness?
McMAHON: No, not actually in the combativeness aspect, but after the match is over.
KING: What might the snake do?
McMAHON: Jake "The Snake" Roberts has a hold he calls "The DDT." And once he lays an opponent out cold, he then will open this giant toe-sack, and out comes this 10-foot python, which he will wrap all over this person's body.
KING: Why then would anyone agree to

wrestle him?
McMAHON: Because they are confident they can beat Jake "The Snake."
KING: And if they lose, confident that the python will not kill them.
McMAHON: They are hopeful that the python will not strangle them, yes.
KING: Do you have a special clause in the contract dealing with pythons?
McMAHON: I'm sure there is an addendum. It's not part of the standard conract, but I'm sure there is some sort of an addendum.
KING: Thank you. We'll go to our next caller. Next. Hello?
CALLER #2: Hi, good evening, Larry. I have a couple of very quick questions. First question is this: Earlier in your conversation, Vince said the purpose of the WWF is entertainment. I'd like to know why the matches that are shown here on Saturday mornings and other parts of the country are such obvious mismatches that it's not even funny. Some of these guys are about as athletic-looking as I am, and I'm not athletic-looking at all!
KING: And your second question?
CALLER #2: My second question would be: Why, when Vince runs the WWF—and it's known to anybody that follows this that he does—when he does the announcing on Saturday mornings he acts like some announcer that they just hired about a week ago, knows nothing about what is going on in his organization, or anything like that. Keep up the good work, Larry, I enjoy you.
KING: Thank you. Okay, number one.
McMAHON: Well, let me respond to number two first. As I said before, I'm a fan. And like it or not, in terms of viewership, not because I'm on the show, but because of the athletes that are on the World Wrestling Federation promotional shows, which as you will note is a totally different kind of show than is the cartoon show on CBS, or for that matter a totally different kind of show than is on *Saturday Night's Main Event* on NBC. So there are different levels, different criterias, and different levels of performance in terms of promotional shows, etc. But nonetheless, to answer both questions, A: I'm a fan, and I respond and I announce as a fan, the way that I see things and the way that I call them, as a fan. Secondly, I'm very happy that your views are not shared with the high television ratings that we enjoy. Obviously, you're in the minority, and the majority of the fans watching our show really very much enjoy it. And that bears out that we are the highest—no, the *second* highest, we're behind *Wheel Of Fortune*—the second-highest syndicated package in America across the country.
KING: You're kidding.
McMAHON: Nope. Nielsen.
[EDITOR'S NOTE: After several commericals, a segment from ***Wrestling TNT*** *was shown, where Nikolai Volkoff is re-introduced to his sister Olga.]*
KING: What was that we just saw there? What was that?
McMAHON: I'm not too sure. I think what it was *supposed* to be was "This Is Your Life Nikolai Volkoff."
KING: I see, and where was that happening?
McMAHON: That was happening on *TNT*, a cable television show.
KING: That you host?
McMAHON: *Did* host. In fact, that was one of my last performances.
KING: He didn't know his own sister? Or that was not his sister?
McMAHON: I don't think he knows. I for sure didn't, either, so I . . . it could very well have been his sister. Nikolai's not the brightest.
KING: Not all wound up too tight, right?
McMAHON: Well, sometimes a little *too* tight.
KING: Okay. Take our next call for Vince McMahon, president of the World Wrestling Federation. Hello.
CALLER #3: Yeah, hi, Larry, this is Chris from Falls Church. I have a comment and question for Mr. McMahon. It's interesting, Vince, to hear you open the show talking about your father. As far as the history of wrestling in Washington goes, I remember when he was promoting matches out at the old Washington Coliseum, and after the shows stopped there, in the years before the Capital Centre was built, us Washington-area fans had to drive to the Baltimore Civic Center in order to see wrestling. Now we're verry happy with the shows at the Capital Centre and we hope they continue. My question is: Do you see a problem with the wrestlers such as Superfly Snuka and maybe Sgt. Slaughter jumping from one alliance to another, and what kind of problems does this create for the WWF?
McMAHON: First of all, thank you very much for your comments from the greater Washington metropolitan area, because that's where my dad really began his start as president of Capital Wrestling Corporation, and Washington is a very, very dear city to me for a number of reasons, one of which is my father. Thank you for recognizing my dad. To answer your question, no, it really does not pose a problem for the WWF because of, again, the vast disparity of compensation that the wrestlers are paid in the WWF as compared to other local and regional promoters.
KING: You haven't lost anybody?
McMAHON: No, we've lost, as a matter of fact, those two individuals. Sgt. Slaughter, who very, very much is trying to make his way back to the WWF now . . .
KING: He quit to join another group?
McMAHON: More or less. He quit really more to branch out on his own in terms of a lot of merchandising, and he got a lot of bad advice, unfortunately. And he's very much looking forward to coming back to the WWF, and negotiating as hard as he can to come back. Superfly Snuka, on the other hand, is . . . I think a lot of people would say he's somewhat of a basket case, and you just can't do anything with that.
KING: You don't have a United States Football League, then, someone taking you on?
McMAHON: No.
KING: No one started a national federation, trying for television time or anything?
McMAHON: No, not really. There are some, again, regional producers that offer an alternative, but it's a very, very poor alternative.
KING: You're on what, NBC on Saturdays?
McMAHON: NBC's *Saturday Night's Main Event*, and we have our own syndication

(Continued on page 52)



McMahon learned the business from his father, Vince McMahon Sr. (above), who learned the business from his father, Jess. When Vince Sr. turned the WWF over to his son, the great expansion effort shifted into high gear.

RIC FLAIR'S TWO-WEEK TEST OF WILL

"I NEVER STOPPED THINKING I WAS CHAMPION!"

Some people might get down, some might give up. But when Ric Flair lost his title, the quiet confidence he exuded said that he would soon regain the NWA World heavyweight belt

By Dave Rosenbaum

EDMUND A. BABIER State Park is located due west of St. Louis, four or five miles off State Highway 40 and, admittedly, a bit off the beaten path. On a clear day, you can look east and faintly pick out the skyline of St. Louis, but if you really want to get away from it all, turn your back on the Gateway City and make believe you're hundreds of miles from civilization.

Artists, writers, poets, and lovers alike visit here to rediscover themselves, search for inspiration, and come to peace with the world. Enter these hallowed grounds and walk away refreshed, look to the west and wonder what early-day settlers must have thought when they looked out upon the vast wilderness that lay ahead. Far from a world of violence, miles from the dirt and traffic of the big city, Edmund A. Babier State Park is one place where a man can go and find himself.

This is a strange place for an interview, especially since Ric Flair absolutely hates Edmund A. Babier State Park. It's too quiet, too clean, too far away from the hustle and bustle of the city life that he loves. Here, nobody notices him, save for the few people who are shocked by his build and mane of blond hair. Flair loves attention, but here he gets none. And it was here that Flair wanted to meet on the 14th day of his titleless reign, August 9, 1986.

"You probably thought I'd be desperate, depressed, and ready to retire," said Flair. "Well, I figured I'd get you out here just to throw you off, then tell you what's been going on in this mind. Dusty might have the belt, baby, but it's only a piece of hardware compared to the real thing." He pointed at his forehead. "Up here, man, in the mind, that's what it's all about. There's a difference between being champion and *being* champion. I never stopped thinking I was champion."

Flair walked slowly along the tree-lined path and the squirrels scurried for cover. He started to pick up steam and little by little, got into the rhythm of the famous Flair strut. The birds sang softly, but one could imagine the opening bars of the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey* blaring over an arena sound system. The sun broke through the clouds and bounced brilliantly off Flair's long strands of hair. One could imag-

ine a bright spotlight glaring down from the rafters. A dog barks. The crowd cheers. A wrestling ring. Edmund A. Babier State Park. The Nature Boy.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, here he is, the former and future NWA heavyweight champion, Ric Flair!"

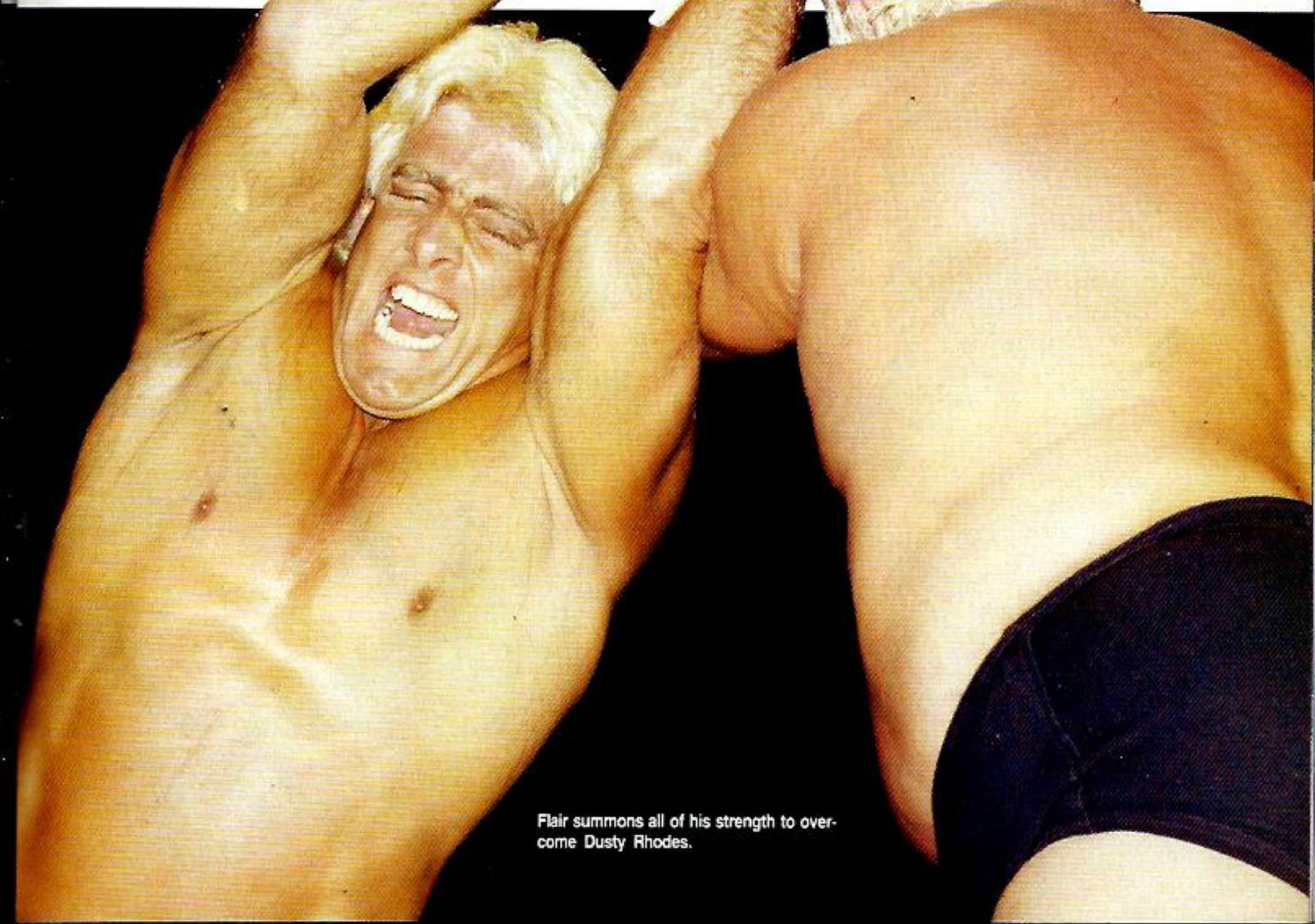
***

Pick up the pace. Ric Flair in the ring. July 26, 1986, in Greensboro, North Carolina, the 13th stop on The Great American Bash tour. Dusty Rhodes is the opponent, and Flair's third title reign is about to come to an end. An incredible battle with numerous near-pins ends with Flair trying to climb up the steel cage, Rhodes pulling him down, and then delivering a series of elbow-smashes leading up to a small package and the pin. After 22 minutes and 35 seconds, Rhodes has the NWA World heavyweight belt, and a nation is in shock.

Dusty speaks first. "The belt daddy, the belt, that's what it's all about and The Dream's got it. They put Flair to the big test, the World Series, during The Bash, daddy, and lemme tell ya, he just couldn't live up to The American Dream. Now I've got it, and I'm keeping it." Loud nervousness. This didn't sound like a champion.

Now, Flair. "Rhodes was just the better man tonight," said Flair. "I was in as good a shape as I've ever been, so I have to give him a lot of credit. I have no excuses, but let me tell you this. Dusty's singing his song right now, but the tune is going to change." Quiet confidence. The voice of a champion, but not yet.

The following day, Rhodes pinned Flair in Dallas. Three days later in Kansas City, he did it again. And two days later in Atlanta. And five days later, again in Kansas City. And the next day in St. Joseph, Missouri. But in Kansas City, the hourglass was starting to run out for Rhodes. In St. Joseph, time wore thinner.



Flair summons all of his strength to overcome Dusty Rhodes.

In St. Louis, it was all over.

***

Two days before Flair regained the belt, Tully Blanchard and J.J. Dillon are in Kansas City for a little shopping trip. Michaels, the world-famous clothing store for big men, is the main stop on their agenda, but they'll also make a little side trip to see their good friend Ric Flair wrestle Dusty Rhodes.

"The Four Horsemen like to stick together," said Blanchard. "Me and J.J. were going to go on to the next town, but we figured we'd stop in K.C. and do some shopping, then maybe catch a wrestling match. Something tells me that Rhodes' time is running out."

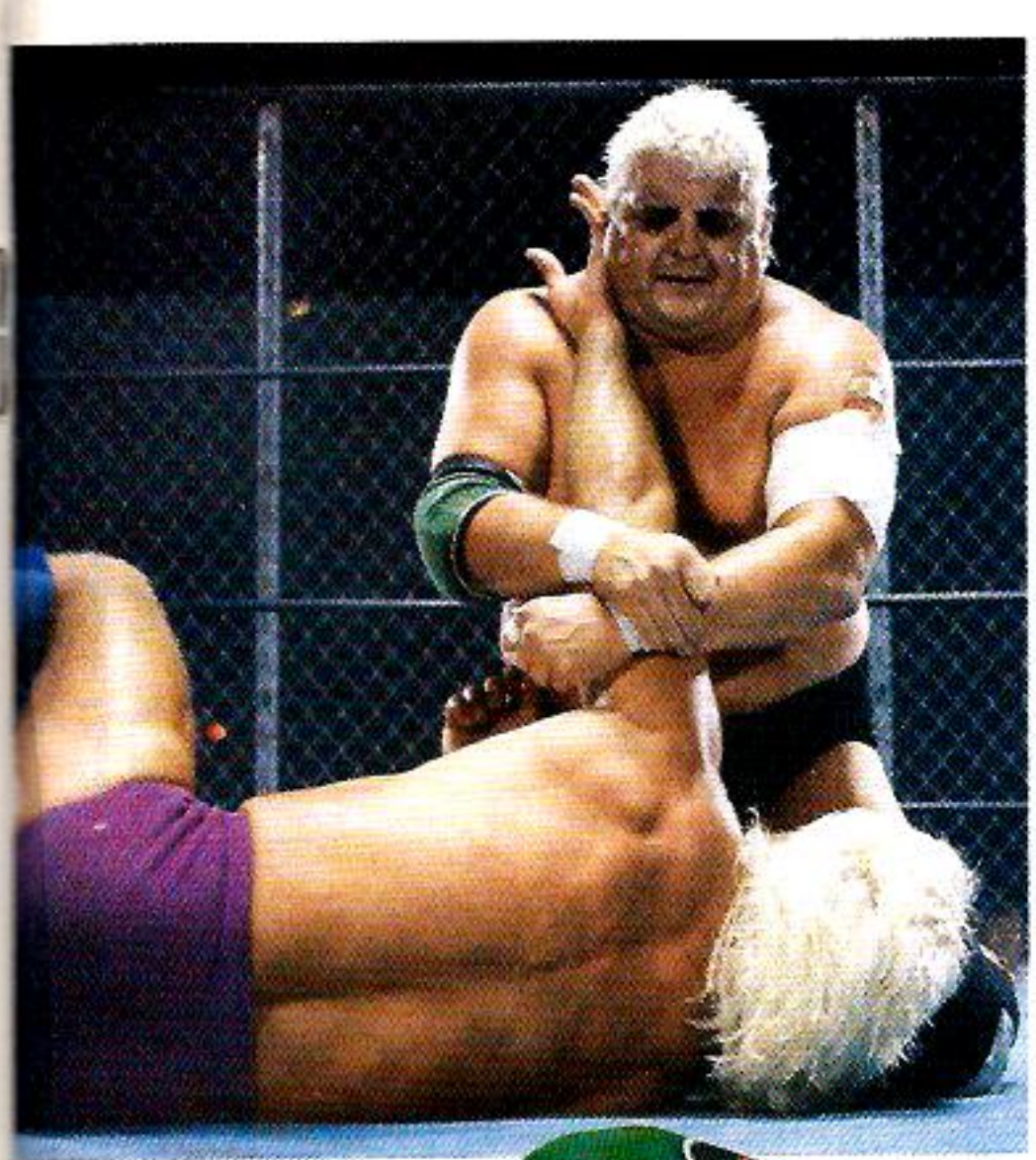
Later, on a television interview, Flair sounds the battle cry. "I'm not worried," says the ex-champion. "Rhodes is going to have to prove that he's a real man, that he can hold on to the title for more than just a few weeks, and he's gonna have to do it by defending against me. The pressure's all on him. If I beat him, he's no longer champion. If he beats me, he's gotta do it again the next time. And the time after that."

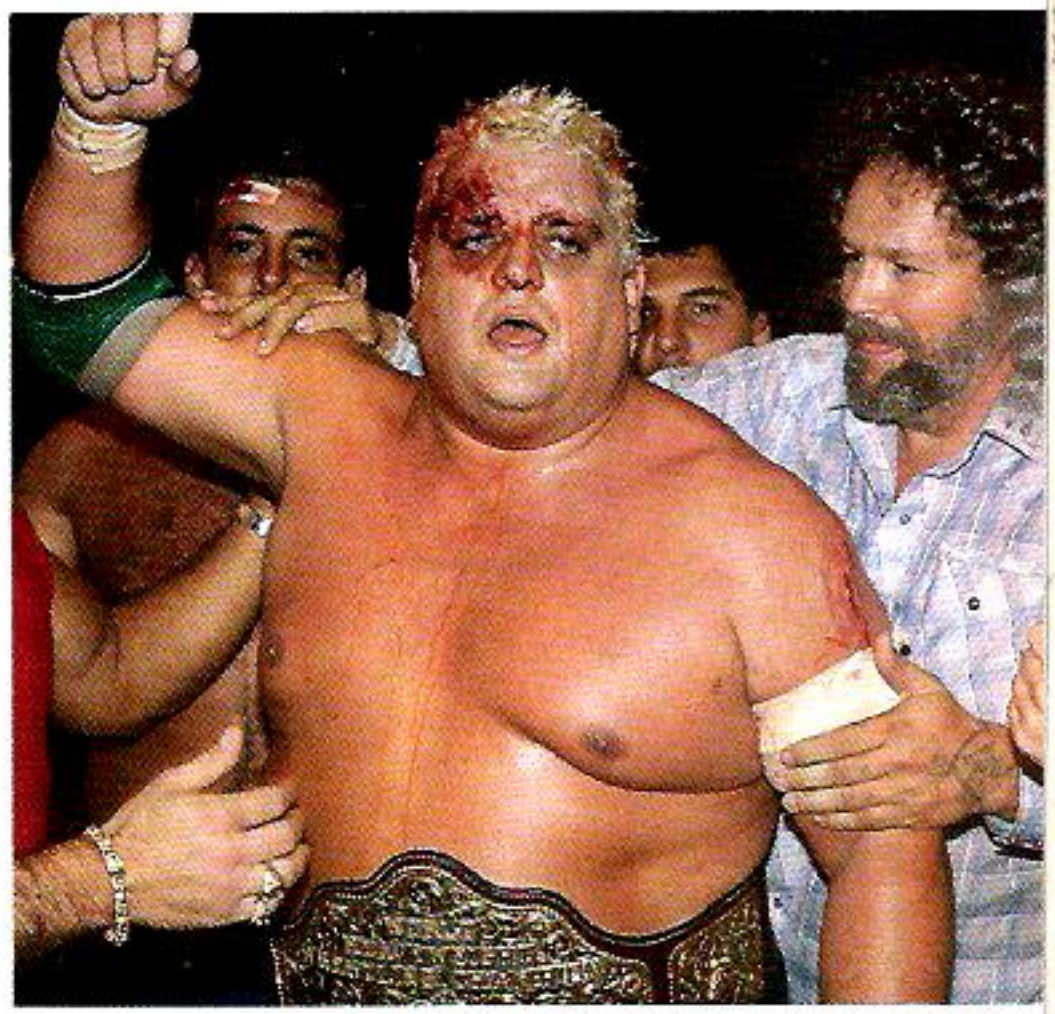
This is the confidence of a wrestler who has been on top for so long, he forgets that he's no longer there. Flair is so used to being champion that he can't, and won't, change his style. Anyway, Flair has nothing to prove. The recently completed third title reign lasted well over two years, and over that period, he took on all competition and proved that he really was a great champion.

Besides, Flair seems to know something that nobody else does.

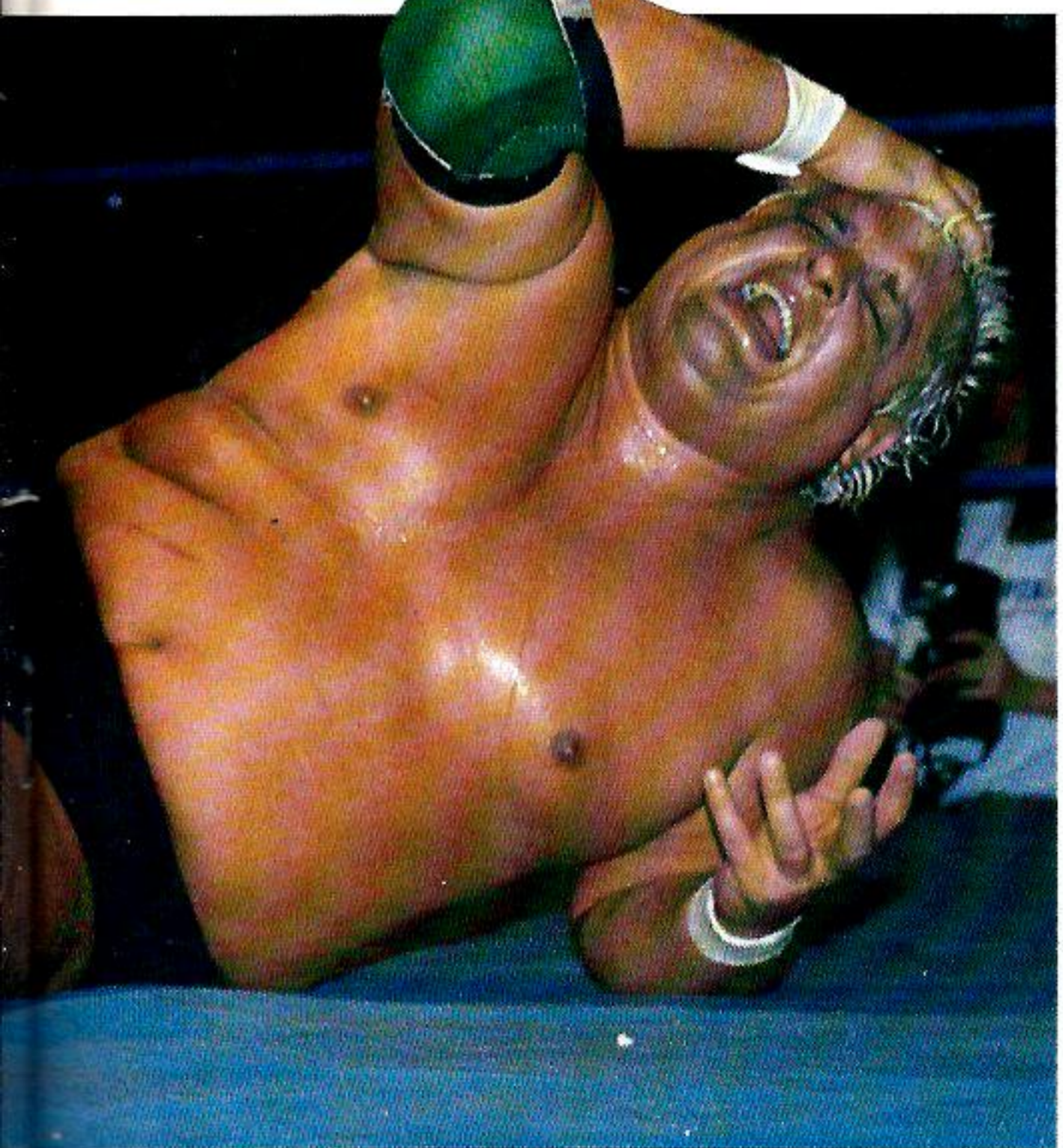
Before the start of the match, Blanchard and Dillon climb into the ring to shake Flair's hand.

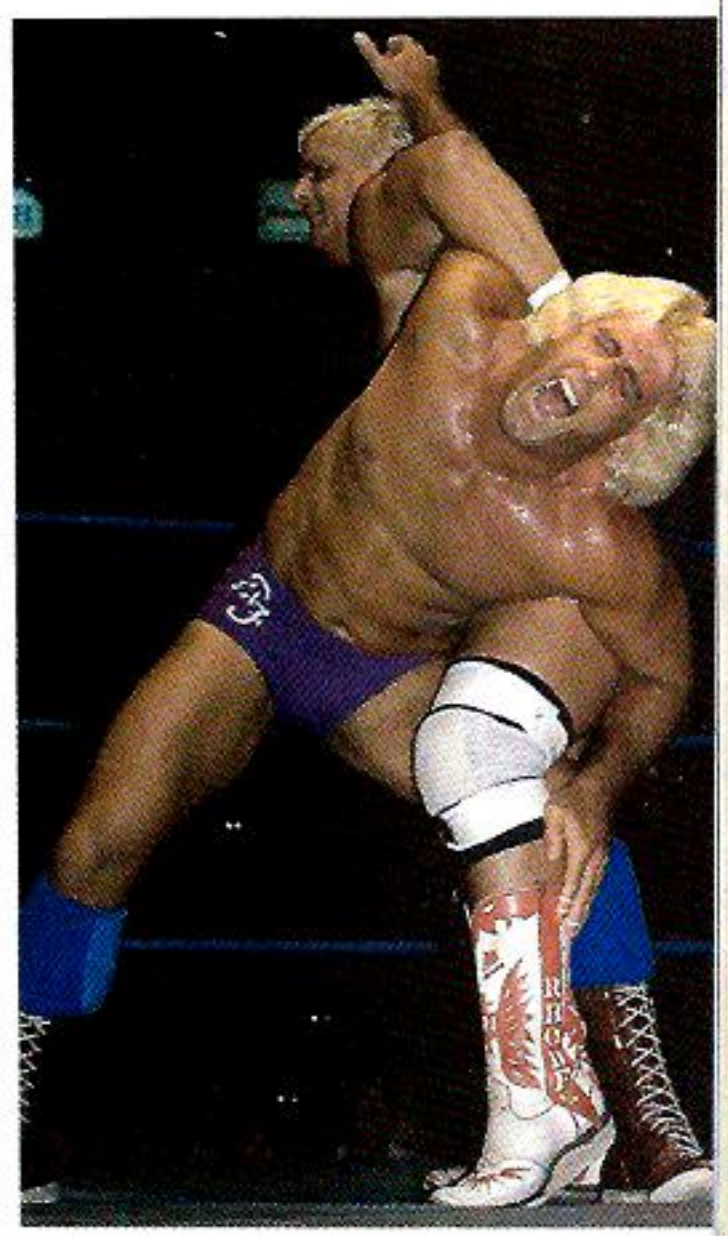
(Continued on page 50)





Rhodes works on Flair's left arm during their cage match at the Greensboro Coliseum (left). Magnum T.A. and musician David Allen Coe help an exhausted "American Dream" celebrate his title victory.





Defending the title for the sixth time, in Kansas City, Rhodes applies an abdominal stretch (above). Dusty writhes in agony as Flair's figure-four leglock places tremendous pressure on his injured left knee (left).

MISSY HYATT'S GUIDE TO THE UWF

OVER THE PAST six months, the Universal Wrestling Federation has earned a reputation as being the roughest, toughest, and meanest area in the world of professional wrestling. Perhaps this has something to do with the invasion of The Fabulous Freebirds from the World Class area, or the return of President Bill Watts to the wrestling ring, or maybe the utter disrespect manager/wrestler Eddie Gilbert has shown for the rules of the game.

More likely, however, it has nothing to do with any of these men. In this case, the culprit is a woman, a young lady named Missy Hyatt who arrived in the UWF area in late June, ready and willing to do business. She wasted nary a minute and proved that Missy Hyatt is not, repeat, not the kind of girl you'd bring home to meet mama.

For one thing, the woman is a blonde bombshell. Make no mistake about it, Missy Hyatt is the kind of girl men dream about while they're away at sea, with her movie starlet face, wavy blonde hair, bright baby blues, and hourglass figure. When she enters the ring wearing a tight black pair of leather pants and a skimpy, low cut, white, see-through (enough already!) tank top, you can sense the increased heart rate of the men in the audience. Face it, guys, Missy fits the rulebreaker's mode, but are there any of you out there that can really say you hate her? C'mon, men, stand up!

Hyatt has associated herself with some of the most controversial men in the UWF: Terry Gordy, Michael Hayes, Buddy Roberts, Eddie Gilbert, John Tatum, Jack Victory, etc. For months, she's been involved in a heated feud with Dark Journey and has publicly vowed to drive her out of the area.

In reality, it would be hard to find a feud in the UWF that isn't connected, in some way, to Missy Hyatt. Because of this, and other factors, the popularity of the UWF is rapidly growing. In some circles, it's recognized as the third-most influential wrestling federation in the country (behind the NWA and WWF). Still, many people are unfamiliar with this area, so the editors of ***Wrestling 86*** *asked Missy Hyatt to author a guide to the Universal Wrestling Federation. She readily agreed and what follows is Missy Hyatt's comprehensive, somewhat biased, completely unedited, guide.*

By Missy Hyatt

WHEN THE PEOPLE from *Wrestling 86* asked me to write this guide to the UWF, I got so excited that I went right out and bought a new teeny string bikini, lots of bathing bubbles, and a big bottle of champagne. *Oooh!* I was so excited, I had Johnny [Tatum] take me out to dinner to celebrate and we had the most wonderful evening.

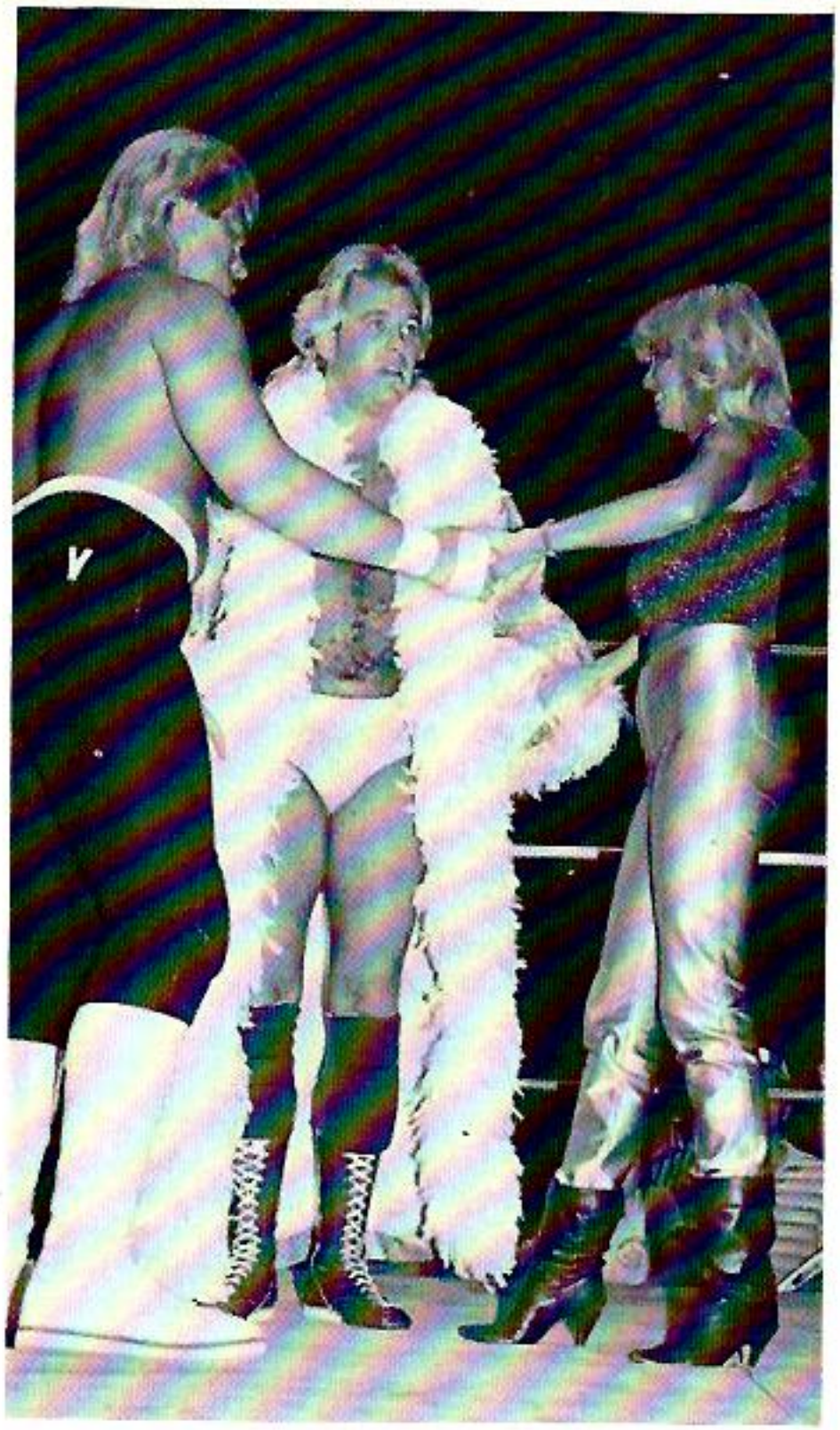
I think I should start off by telling y'all that John Tatum is the hottest thing in the UWF, professionally speaking, naturally. Now, I'm not saying that his big, hard body and rippling muscles don't turn me on, but as a wrestler, he's really tops.

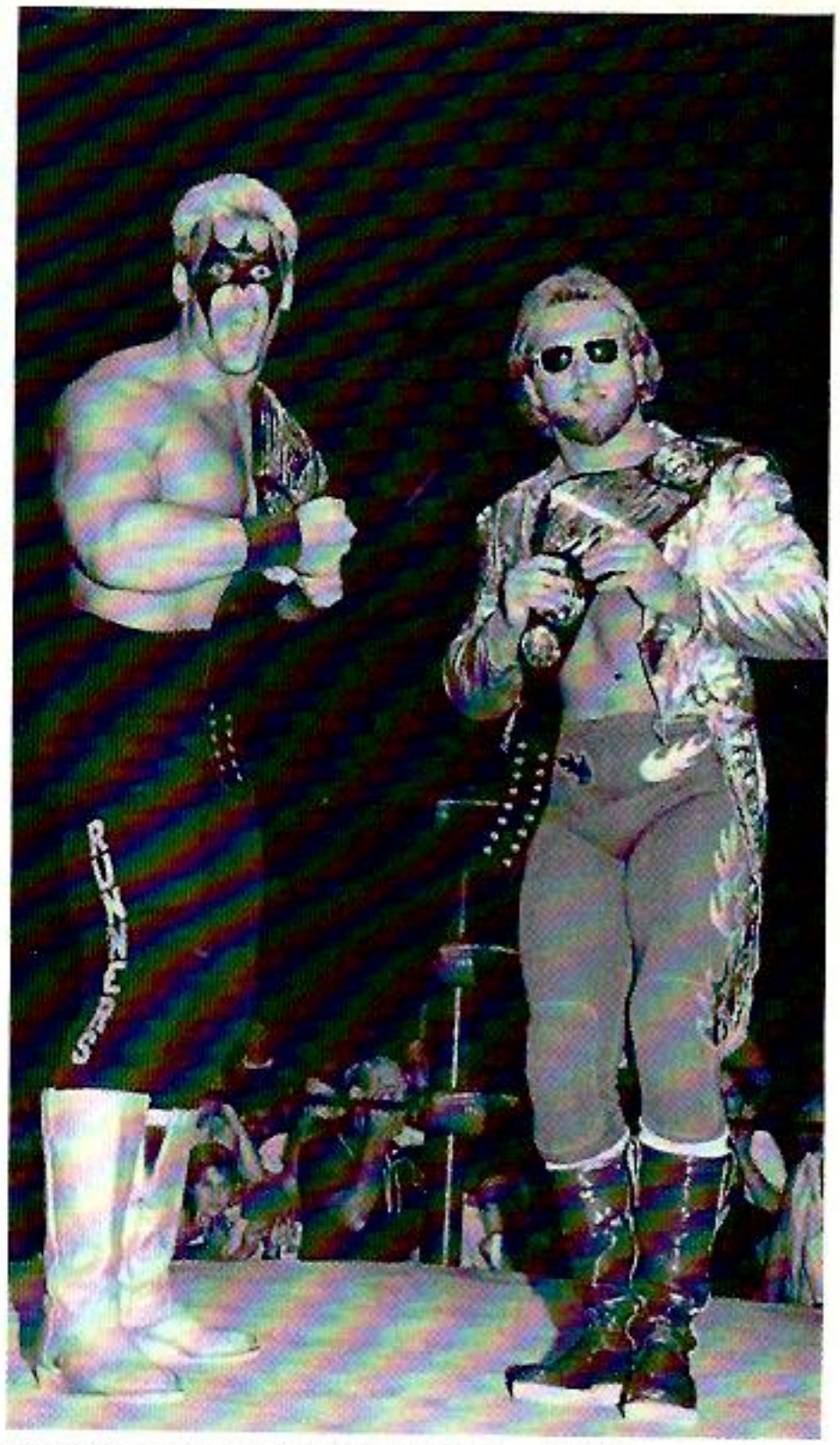
Now, just for those of y'all who aren't familiar with it, the Universal Wrestling Federation used to be known as the Mid-South area. A wild-haired freak named Hacksaw Jim Duggan (who I think is one of the ugliest men alive) was the champion of Mid-South, but then they decided to change the name to UWF and hold a tournament over in Houston to pick a new champ.

All the big guys were there, Jack [Victory], The Blade Runners, Kamala, The Freebirds, Duggan, [Ted] DiBiase. Johnny and I weren't in the UWF yet, but we were based down in Texas and decided to go see it. Well, it was incredibly exciting, and in the finals Terry Gordy pinned Duggan to win the first UWF heavyweight title.

A few weeks after that, John and I signed a contract to come to the

With an impressive roster of wrestlers that includes many of the sport's most rugged athletes, the Universal Wrestling Federation has become the fastest growing area in the sport. But it's a woman who has drawn most of the attention. In this exclusive article for *Wrestling 86*, Missy Hyatt provides an in-depth guide to the UWF





Above left: As expected, Missy Hyatt and John Tatum joined forces with their longtime friend Jack Victory (far left) when they arrived in the UWF. Above right: Not expected, however, was the agreement Hyatt made with Eddie Gilbert, who manages and holds the UWF tag team title with Blade Runner Sting.

UWF, and from what I hear it hasn't been the same since then. Actually, from what I can tell, things were pretty wild before that. The Freebirds, that's Terry, Gordy, Michael Hayes, and Buddy Roberts, signed this $1 million contract—one million dollars, imagine that!—to come to the UWF and they immediately started making things happen.

Anyway, I can tell that I'm starting to get away from the subject. You see, I'm not really a writer, so the editors of *Wrestling 86* realized this and sent me a list of suggestions of what I should write about. They said that I should write a little thing about all the main people in the UWF, so that's what I'm gonna do. Here goes!

EDDIE GILBERT: Eddie is a managerial genius, and if you ask me, the best manager in the world. His organization is called Hot Stuff International and mine is called Hyatt Incorporated, so recently, we decided to join forces. I've always said that bigger is better, you know! Eddie managed The Blade Runners and Kortsia Korchenko, but, you see, Eddie got into this little spat with Bill Watts. He's the president of the UWF, but I'll get to him later. Anyway, Rock, he's one of The Blade Runners, and Korchenko, decided that they couldn't get a fair shake around here as long as Watts was president, so they decided to take off. Eddie decided to wrestle again and he made a tag team with Sting, the other Blade Runner. Well, you'll never believe what happened. This makeshift tag team got in that ring and beat the stuffin's out of The Fantastics for the UWF tag team championship. With a bit a help from yours truly, of course.

THE FREEBIRDS: I told you before who they are. Terry is still the champion and Michael and Buddy do most of the tag team wrestling, although Terry still gets involved sometimes. They used to be six-man champs in the World Class. The Freebirds are also having this feud with Watts. Things aren't going so well right now, but I have a feeling that they're about to change. Old man Watts can't keep going for long. Anyway, I've become really good friends will all three of these boys and let me tell ya, honey, they're the bitchinest partyers I've ever known. They can make a case of Jack Daniels disappear in no time at all. They're pretty good at making other things disappear, too, but that's a story for another day.

DARK JOURNEY: I was gonna ignore her, but the guys at *86* insisted that I be fair, so I'll keep it short. The

Hyatt does not think much of Dark Journey or the wrestler Dark Journey brought in to battle Missy's men, Missing Link.

sooner that prissy pig gets out of the UWF, the better. She thinks she can take over the UWF, but the only wrestler who can stand her is The Missing Link, so how the heck is she gonna do that? Personally, I think she's gone batty. By the way, I got a funny story about Dark Urinary. The other day, Michael Hayes decided to show everybody the way a real man acts, so he climbed into the ring and planted this big, long kiss on Dark Urinary's lips. Well, it sure looked to me like she enjoyed it, but then she remembered what a bitch she is, hauled back, and slapped Michael in the face. Everybody laughed, but if you ask me, Dark Urinary was exposed for the kind of woman she is. I intend to have her out of here in no time at all.

BILL WATTS: Mr. President—an old, fat, over-the-hill, senile, thieving . . . Boy, I could go on forever, but you know what I'm talking about. This guy's always rattlin' and tattlin' and runnin' off at the mouth about this and that and all this crap about defending his country, but he don't do nothin' anyway. What kind of president gets into the ring and wrestles the men he's supposed to be in charge of? It just don't seem fair to me. He's feuding with half the guys in this area, then he turns around and tries to act like he's president. I can guarantee you that me and my men will teach him a lesson but good.

THE FANTASTICS: Bobby Fulton and Tommy Rogers are just a bunch of pretty boys, and nothing pleased me more than watching The Sheepherders (they used to be champs, but they're gone now) and Jack rake their pretty little faces across a barbed wire fence. All these teenybopper girls always shout, "Oh Bobby! Oh Tommy! We love you! You're our favorites! We have your picture on the wall!" It turns my stomach to see women acting this way. I couldn't believe that these guys were tag team champs, but Eddie and Sting took care of that. Now, instead of being pretty boys, they're pretty boy has-beens.

HACKSAW DUGGAN, TERRY TAYLOR, STEVE WILLIAMS, TED DIBIASE: The scum of the earth all gets lumped together in my book. If you ask me, wrestling is a man's sport, for real men with courage and strength and even a little bit of sex appeal. That never hurt no one, did it? Hee hee! Well, these four are the poorest excuses for men I've ever known. Hacksaw, for instance, suffered this little injury before the finals of the UWF tournament and acted like he was about to die. Taylor has been wrestling in tag teams with Watts, so that's all you need to know about him. Williams calls himself Dr. Death. That's a joke! He must be talking about his breath! And DiBiase! Here's a funny story. Back in July, Terry Gordy was kicking DiBiase's butt, and then, just for fun, Michael and Buddy came into the ring. Well, they're just doing a little three-on-one, nothing wrong with that, and Dr. Breath runs into the ring. So, they decide to have a little fun with Williams, and Gordy gives him a piledriver, and they had to take Williams away and put him into traction. You should have seen DiBiase! The guy was practically crying, he was so upset. Ya see, a bunch of years ago, The Freebirds did the same thing to DiBiase. Now, all they have to do is get Duggan and Taylor, but that shouldn't be a problem.

ONE MAN GANG: Eddie Gilbert and I are really proud of OMG, as we call him, and we'd love to have him join us, but right now he's pretty well tied up with Skandor Akbar's Devastation Inc. These two did a real number on Duggan the other day and it was the greatest thing I've ever seen. Anyway, OMG is a pretty big guy, the biggest in the UWF from what I

(Continued on page 62)

Full-time UWF President and part-time wrestler Bill Watts locks up in a test of strength with Sting. Missy Hyatt does not understand how Watts can wrestle and still objectively govern the federation. Watts has become the primary target of UWF rulebreakers.

Jerry Lawler sticks it to Hulk Hogan.

Hogan, Bundy, Savage, Rude, Bockwinkel . . .

What Do They Have In Common?

JERRY LAWLER'S BEATEN THEM ALL!

Jerry Lawler has never won a world title. But, judging by the list of wrestlers he's defeated, he truly deserves the crown he wears into the ring

By Eddie Ellner

LET'S START BY dispelling some of the myths and correcting the misinformation surrounding the life and career of Jerry "The King" Lawler. His favorite performer *is not* Andy Kaufman. It *is* Elvis Presley and he is fiercely proud of his adopted moniker. His favorite television show is *All My Children*, not *Late Night With David Letterman*.

Lawler's favorite food and drink are fried chicken and Coke, choices that haven't changed since Lawler's entry into the fast food market—"Slamburgers"—failed, his attempts to skewer beef and customers as he did his opponents becoming one of his few entrepreneurial miscues. Of his Slamburgers' Fried Chicken ($1.89 for three pieces, potato salad, roll, and a deviled egg), Lawler once said, "If the Colonel had our recipe, he'd be a King!" What can you say other than that no one ever saw Colonel Sanders deliver a fistdrop from the top rope.

Lawler hates spinach, prefers Goldie Hawn and Teri Garr to other actresses, and roots for the Cleveland Browns in the fall. In his spare time, he watches old movies and washes his many customized cars. Lawler is an accomplished artist whose drawings have been sold all over the world. His television show, *The Jerry Lawler Show*, is one of the most highly rated in the Memphis area, a success squarely summarizing the paradox of Jerry Lawler.

Lawler's overwhelming popularity in his home town of Memphis has prompted many of his critics to reverse the old axiom and say of Jerry Lawler, *"Can the man play in New York?"* Can Lawler take to the road and be as successful as he has in Memphis?

Amidst great anticipation, Jerry Lawler recently rated his 10 toughest opponents. They were, in descending order, Jackie Fargo, Terry Funk, Nick Bockwinkel, Jos LeDuc, Jimmy Valiant, Bill Dundee, Jack Brisco, Ken Patera, The Road Warriors, and Dutch Mantel.

Perhaps more revealing are the names Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, King Kong Bundy, and Rick Rude, men linked by their dominance of today's mat game—and something else. In the course of their careers, they have all been crowned by the King. Jerry Lawler, currently unrated in the Top 10 and largely unknown outside the Memphis area, owns pinfall victories over them all. And he doesn't have the consideration to even rate them in his top 10.

"Maybe if I wrestled Hogan today, I'd put him in my top 10," the King explains, "but back in '81 he was easy pickings. Same goes for Savage and Bundy. Forget the other guy. Rude was easy. I can't believe he was World Class champion for so long."

And what of Ric Flair, the Sheiks (both Iron and Original), Harley Race, Bruiser Brody, and Bobo Brazil? Lawler owns victories over them, too. Does he claim that Dutch Mantel was a tougher opponent than Flair? Jos Leduc a more worthy foe than Rick Martel?

"Hey, why would I lie?" he asks. "I have no reason to lie, nothing to gain from it. The problem with a lot of people is that they underestimate the wrestling talent here in the Mid-Southern area. They can't believe that any of our boys can wrestle worth a damn. If it doesn't originate from New York or from Crockett country, then

(Continued on page 60)

THE PRIVATE SIDE

JIM CORNETTE

THIS MAY COME as a great surprise to many wrestling fans. In fact, it should be a great shock to anyone who has followed the NWA over the past few years and watched Jim Cornette, manager of The Midnight Express, use his tennis racket for a wide variety of purposes, ranging from hitting opponents over the head to shoving the butt end into Baby Doll's abdomen. Get ready. Brace yourselves.

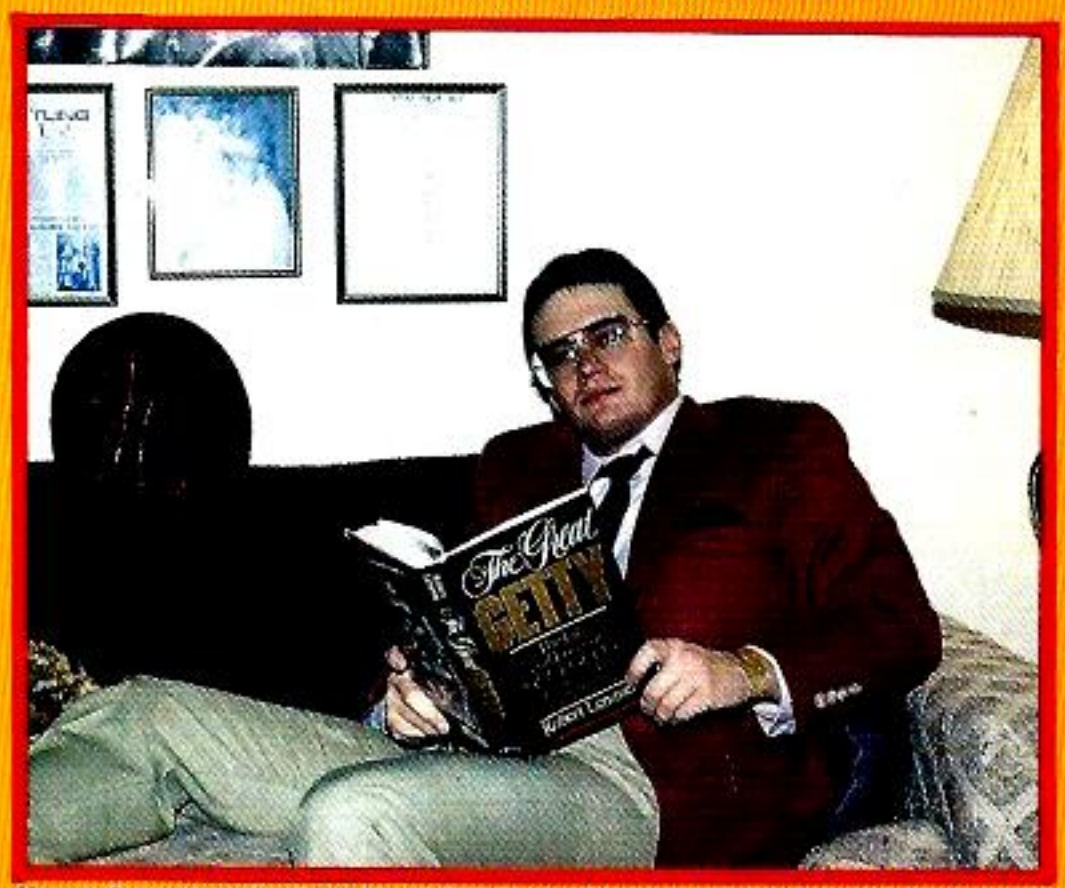
Jim Cornette really does play tennis.

"Jim was giving me a tour of the grounds around his home in Charlotte [North Carolina] while I was preparing to shoot 'The Private Side' photos," said *Wrestling 86* photographer Floyd See, "and I just stopped short in my tracks. Jim said, 'What's wrong?' and I said, 'The tennis court! You have a tennis court!' Well, he just started cracking up. He laughed so hard, he was lying on the ground, then said to me, 'Well, what the heck do you think I have a tennis racket for?' "

There were many things See saw during a visit to Cornette's sprawling Charlotte ranch (one of five homes he maintains) that struck him by surprise. Indeed, Cornette's ring manner is loud, brash, and obnoxious.

But at home, Cornette's style is so simple as to be almost boring. In fact, the only real extravagance Cornette owns is his sleek, sporty, bright red Porsche convertible. "This is my baby," boasts Cornette. "It was a gift from Mother for managing The Midnight Express to the NWA World tag team title. This car and my tennis court are really the centerpieces of this place."

Ah, the tennis court. Enemies of Cornette, and there



Above: Cornette curls up on his cashmere couch and reads about one of the few men who ever accumulated more riches than he did—J. Paul Getty. Top: Cornette likes to show off his awards. Right: NWA representative Sandy Scott comes to Cornette's office to discuss the particulars of a match contract.

THE PRIVATE SIDE

are many, might be amused to learn that the man is not a good tennis player. "Absolutely awful," revealed See, "one of the worst I've ever seen. But he really seems to enjoy his time out on the court. It kind of relaxes him, makes him into a different person."

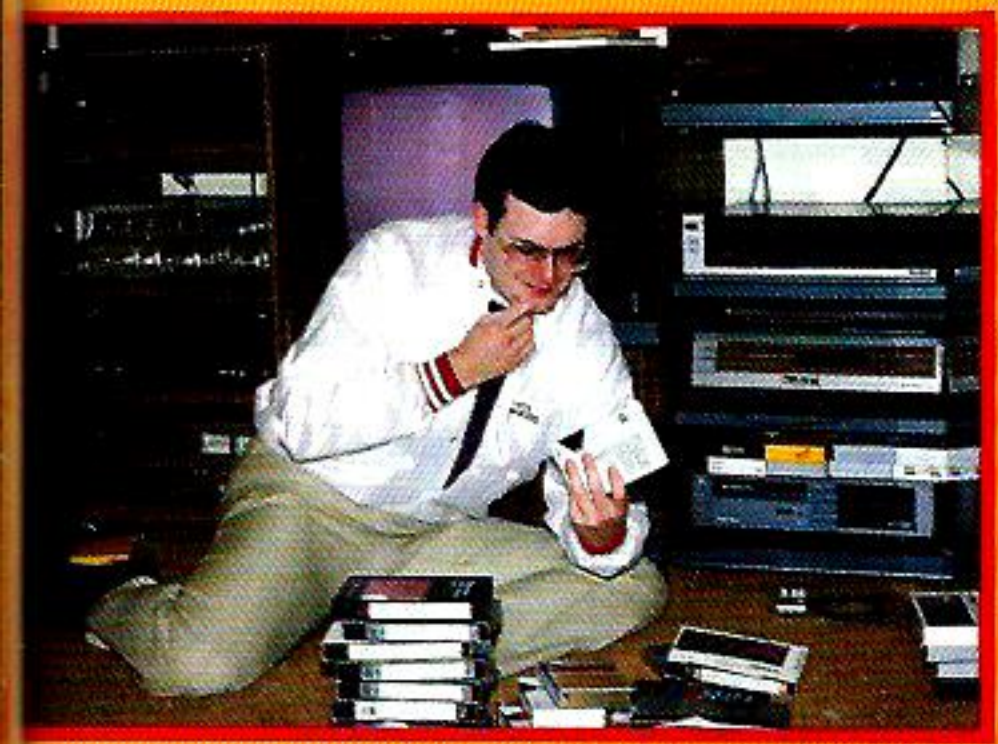
At home, Cornette has the chance to bring down his intensity level and live at a more relaxed pace. After playing tennis, Cornette likes to sit down for a light lunch of salmon salad and iced tea, and then head to his bedroom for a mid-afternoon nap.

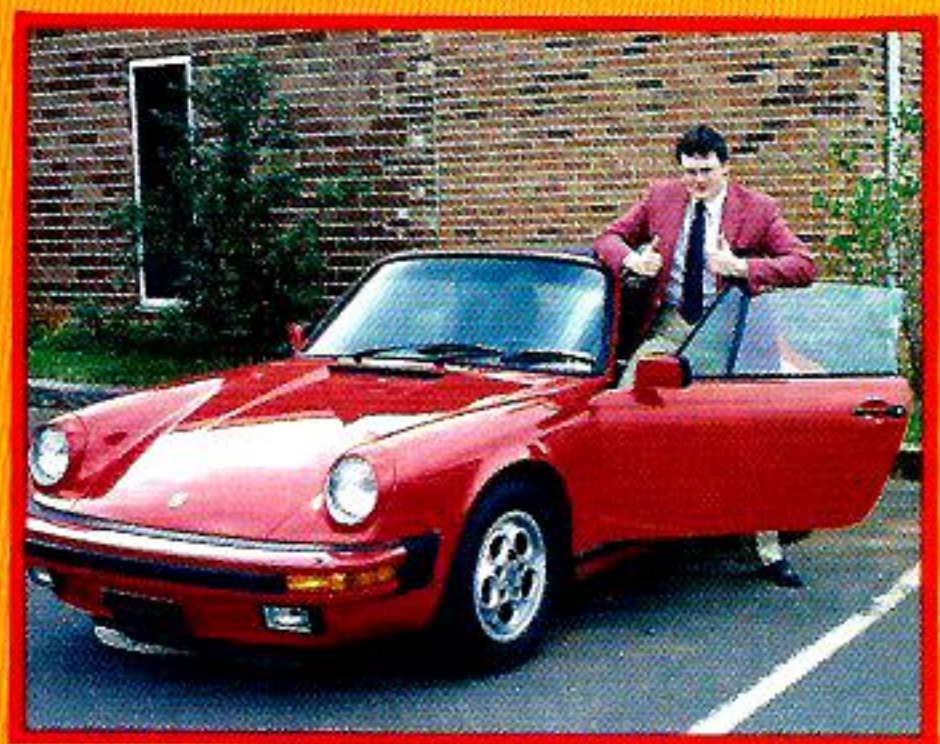
"He gave me full run of the house while he slept," noted See, "but after about an hour, I wanted to ask him a few questions. Well, I walked into his bedroom and I couldn't believe my eyes. Cornette was wrapped in a Midnight Express blanket, sucking on his thumb and holding on to a teddy bear. He woke up, turned beet red, and started stammering an explanation."

Well-rested, Cornette is prepared to spend a few hours reviewing tapes from his extensive video collection.

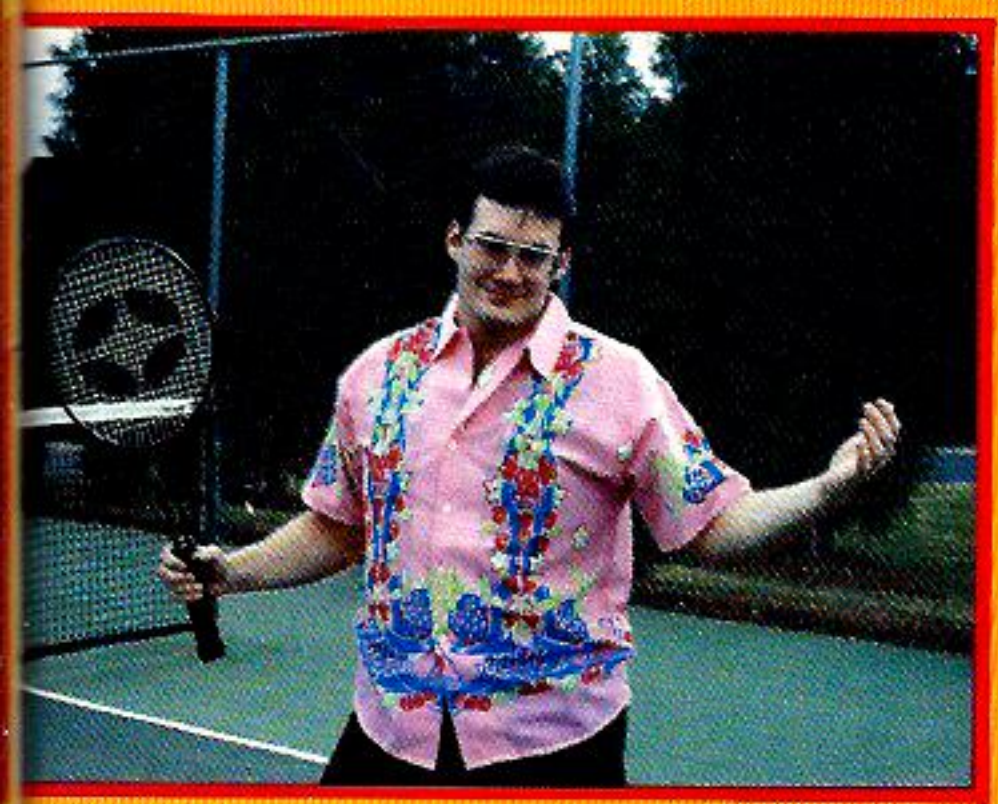
"This is where it all comes together," Cornette revealed with disarming candor. "Right here, I can pick apart the game plan of every challenger and prepare my men. Without these tapes, The Midnight Express wouldn't be champions."

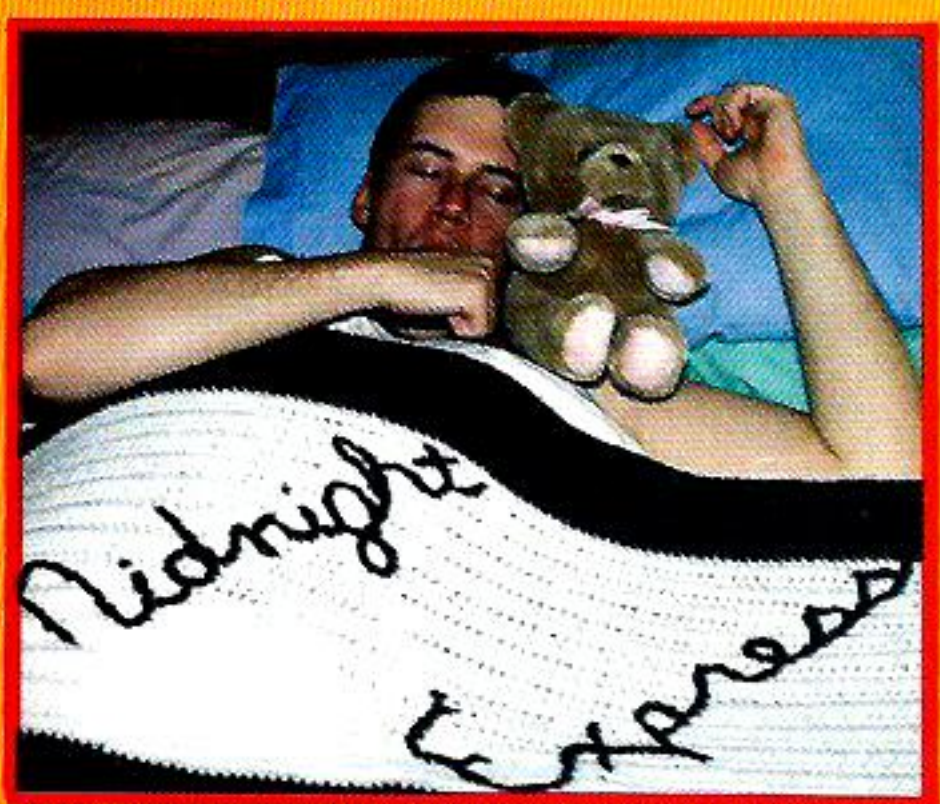
Cornette is extremely proud of the dozens of awards and plaques that adorn the west wall of his private office, especially the "Manager Of The Year Award" he received from *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* in 1985. The office itself says a lot about the man. "Everything is in order and has its place," reported See. "Cornette really seems to know where he's going and where he's coming from. I was very impressed." □





Top left: Cornette spends countless hours studying videotapes of his Midnight Express and their challengers. Top right: The Porsche was a gift from his mother after the Midnights won the NWA tag team title. Below left: Cornette does use his tennis racket for tennis—well, barely. Below right: In this case, one picture *is* worth a thousand words!





Stan Hansen's arms were not powerful enough to keep the AWA World championship belt from the powers that be in the AWA president's office. Should Hansen have been stripped of the title?

YOU DECIDE

SHOULD STAN HANSEN HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF HIS AWA WORLD TITLE?

IT'S STADIUM COURT at the United States Tennis Center and a sellout crowd, millions of television viewers around the world, and representatives from every major newspaper, television station, and radio network are eagerly awaiting the start of the 1987 U.S. Open finals between John McEnroe and Ivan Lendl.

Lendl, the defending champion, has already taken the court to start warming up, but McEnroe, the bad boy of tennis, the superstar that everybody loves to hate, has yet to appear. Over the course of the two-week tournament, the self-proclaimed "new" John McEnroe has had numerous arguments and falling outs with officials, and in one instance during the third round actually walked off the court to protest a linesman's call before friends convinced him to return.

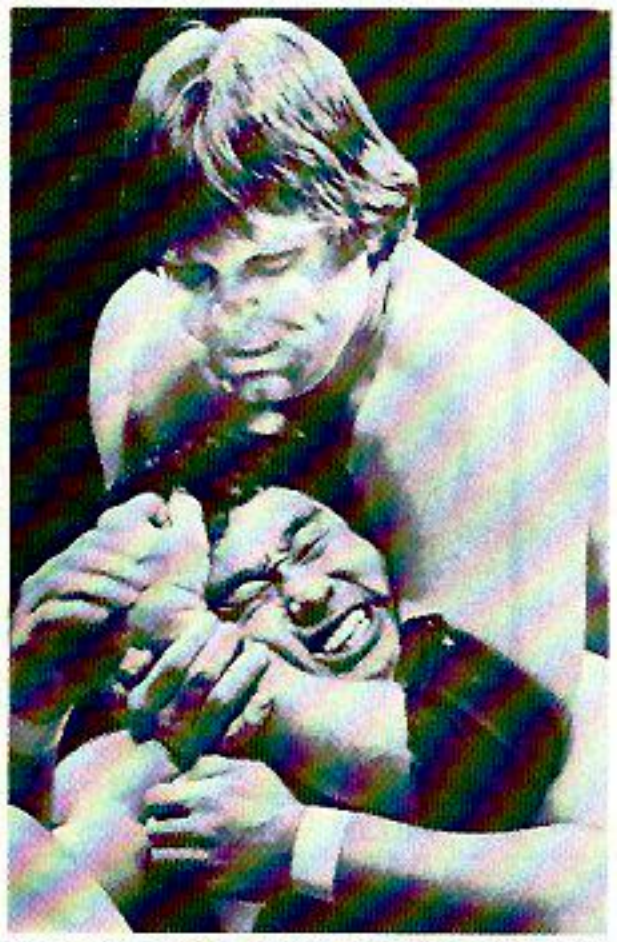
Meanwhile, U.S.T.A. officers have convened at the president's courtside box for an emergency meeting. Upon arriving at the stadium, McEnroe was informed that the same crew that officiated his third-round match was assigned to the finals. Enraged, McEnroe demanded a new set of officials but his request was denied. Then, much to the astonishment of the U.S.T.A. president, McEnroe packed his bags and stalked out of the arena.

The U.S.T.A. governors are in a bind, but in reality they have no choice. McEnroe has refused to return unless the officials are changed, but that cannot be arranged. By leaving, McEnroe has forfeited the match and Lendl must be awarded the Open championship. Certainly, his past actions don't warrant him the benefit of the doubt. But what about the fans, the press, television, and, perhaps, most important, the image of tennis?

Still, the announcement is made: Lendl, by forfeit, is declared the winner of the Open. A near riot ensues in the grandstand, television executives are irate, millions of dollars in commercial time has been lost, and the U.S. Open has been forever tarnished. Meanwhile, John McEnroe is nowhere to be found.

***

Impossible, you say? It can never happen, you insist? Well, you're probably right. John McEnroe is such a fierce competitor that even his inborn stubborness will not allow him to forfeit the finals of the U.S. Open if he makes it that far next year.



Stan Hansen has put the AWA title belt on the line while on tour in Japan. Unfortunately, he is no longer recognized by the AWA as its champion.

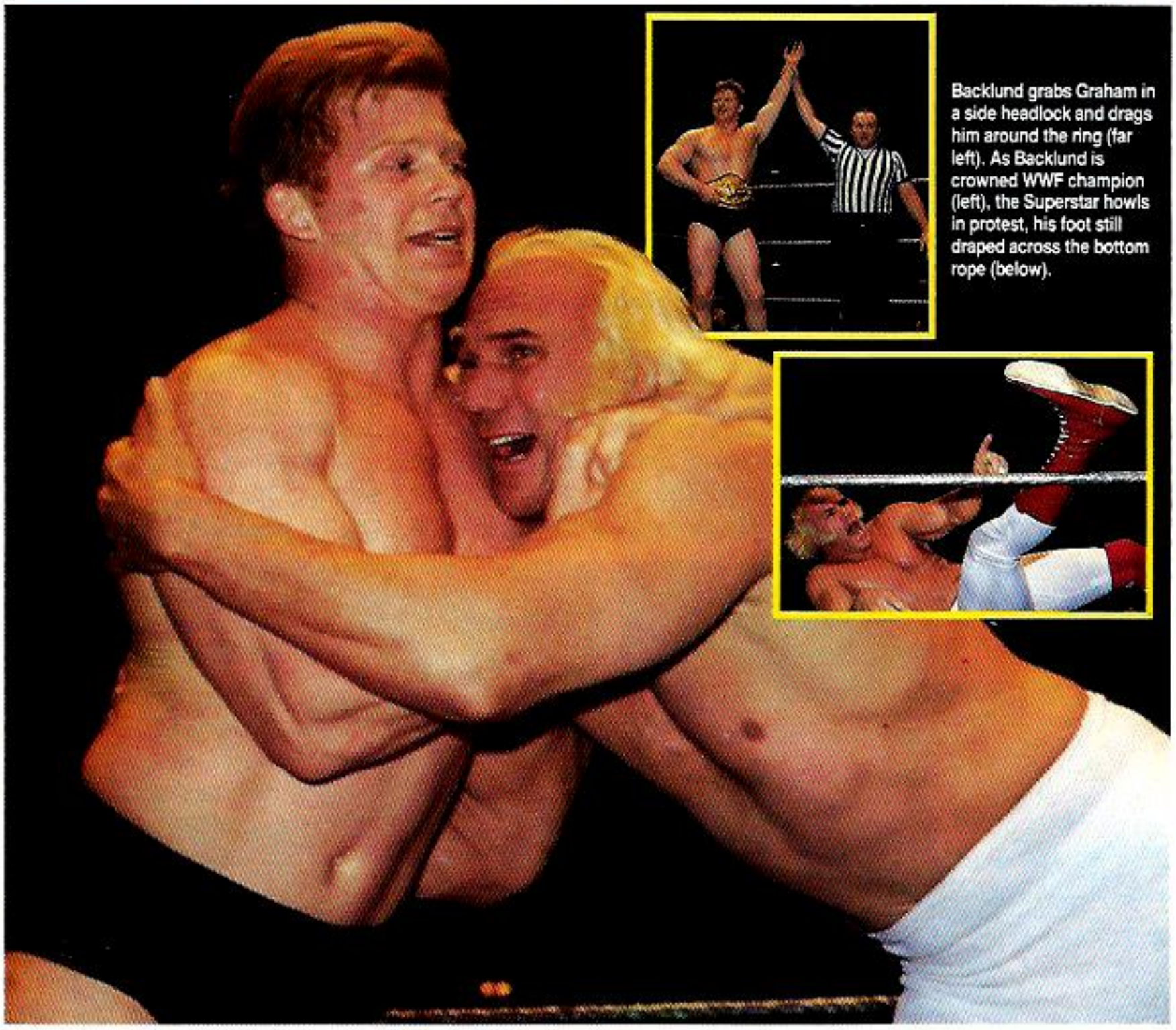
But a similar situation *did* occur in the American Wrestling Association, when World champion Stan Hansen failed to appear for a match with challenger Nick Bockwinkel on June 29 in Denver. Actually, Hansen did show up, but for reasons that have never been made quite clear, he left the arena in anger. President Stanley Blackburn announced that if Hansen did not reappear in a prescribed period of time, the belt would be awarded to Bockwinkel. As we all know by now, Hansen never came back and Bockwinkel became the AWA World champion, a title he still holds. This set off a rage of controversy. Many people felt that Blackburn acted unfairly and had no right to strip Hansen of his title. "This was a very harsh reaction to the situation," said one fan. Others felt that Hansen deserved what he got. "Hansen has disqualified himself in the past to keep the title, but simply not showing up is going too far," said another fan.

Certainly, most of the fans in McNichols Arena that night were not disappointed. When the announcement was made, the fans gave the new champion a standing ovation, showing little disappointment at not being able to see the match. But this was a reflex reaction and involved little thought. It would be interesting to see how those same fans would react now.

"The point that must be made," says wrestling historian Hugo Von Erchwatz, "is that the AWA had some precedent for this decision. Verne Gagne had won the AWA World title from Nick Bockwinkel back in July of 1980. He received permission from Blackburn to vacation in Europe. At the time, Gagne also held the AWA World tag team title along with Mad Dog Vachon. Verne did not realize that he and Vachon were signed to defend against Jesse Ventura and Adrian Adonis [ironically, for promoter Gene Reed in Denver] when he left for vacation. Blackburn ruled that the belts be given to Adonis and Ventura by default." But except for an obtuse quote in the December 1986 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, in which he accused Bockwinkel of paying off everybody associated with the match, Hansen has yet to offer an explanation for his actions. On the surface, it would appear as if Hansen felt that he was going to lose to Bockwinkel that night

(Continued on page 59)

"A DISGRACE, A FRAUD, AND A THIEF!"



Backlund grabs Graham in a side headlock and drags him around the ring (far left). As Backlund is crowned WWF champion (left), the Superstar howls in protest, his foot still draped across the bottom rope (below).

EIGHT YEARS HAVE passed, but on any wrestling night, you can still walk into bars and restaurants near Madison Square Garden and listen to mat afficionados discuss the circumstances surrounding February 20, 1978, at the world's most famous arena.

The controversy still rages about the day that Bob Backlund defeated Superstar Billy Graham for the WWF World heavyweight championship. Backlund stopped Graham's title reign at 10 months and proceeded to hold the belt for almost six years.

For the better part of 15 minutes, Backlund dominated Graham, progressively weakening him until the champion was primed for Backlund's final maneuver. Backlund hoisted Graham upon his shoulder for an atomic spinecrusher and slammed him down onto his raised knee.

Graham bounced off the knee in pain and landed with his right leg draped over the lower rope. This should have resulted in a break of the hold, but the referee didn't see it. Backlund pinned Graham at the 14:51 mark.

Films proved conclusively that Graham had his foot on the ropes when he was pinned. Backlund's victory was invalid. The Grand Wizard, Graham's manager, immediately protested, but the decision was allowed to stand.

This touched off a storm of controversy. Graham wanted the belt back. "The man won it illegally," Graham said. "He's a disgrace, a fraud, and a thief." Backlund, feeling that he had won the belt unfairly, considered giving it back. "When I saw the films showing Graham did have his foot on the ropes, I felt like someone had kicked me in the gut," he said. "It was the saddest day of my life. The WWF title deserved better than that. The fans deserved better than that."

Backlund was vindicated as the result of a poll in the July 1978 issue of *The Wrestler*. The fans were asked, "Should Bob Backlund Return the WWF Belt To Superstar Graham?" and responded with an outpouring of support for the new champion. Of 9,260 votes, only 117 favored Graham.

"I just can't believe those fans," an emotional Backlund said. "They are the greatest group of people in the world."

Perhaps, after all is said and done, this was Backlund's *real* "Golden Moment." □

Ric Flair

(Continued from page 35)

Twenty minutes later, Rhodes pins Flair to retain the title. Afterward, however, Dillon complains that Flair's foot was under the ropes. By this time, however, Flair had gotten up, making it impossible for referee Sonny Myers to make a ruling.

Suddenly, Blanchard enters the ring in street clothes and attacks Rhodes with a chair. Flair puts Dusty in a figure-four leglock and Blanchard dives off the ropes and onto Rhodes. Flair continues to apply pressure to Dusty's left leg and the Dream screams in pain. Later in the dressing room, a physician tells Rhodes that his knee is in bad shape and he shouldn't wrestle for a few weeks.

Flair and his men had recreated their crime. Last October, Flair and the Andersons attacked Rhodes and broke his left ankle. This time, they worked on his knee. Just outside the dressing room, a reporter asks Flair if he had purposely centered the attack on Rhodes' left leg. Flair just laughs, smiles, and walks away.

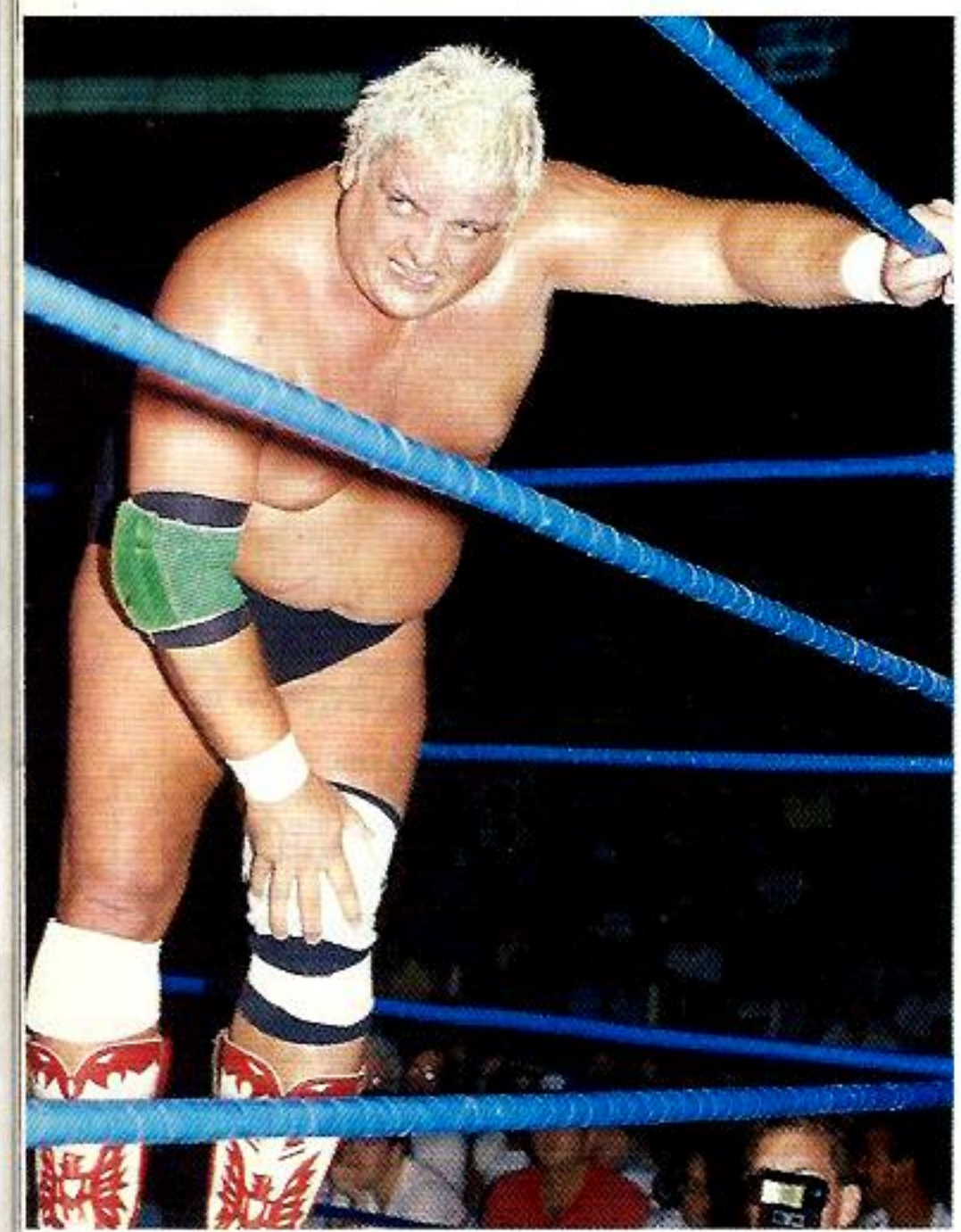
Despite the doctor's urgings, Rhodes wrestles in St. Joseph the following night and suffers additional damage to his left leg. He was obviously wrestling in pain and many reporters on the scene wondered if Rhodes would get out of St. Louis with the belt around his waist. He wouldn't.

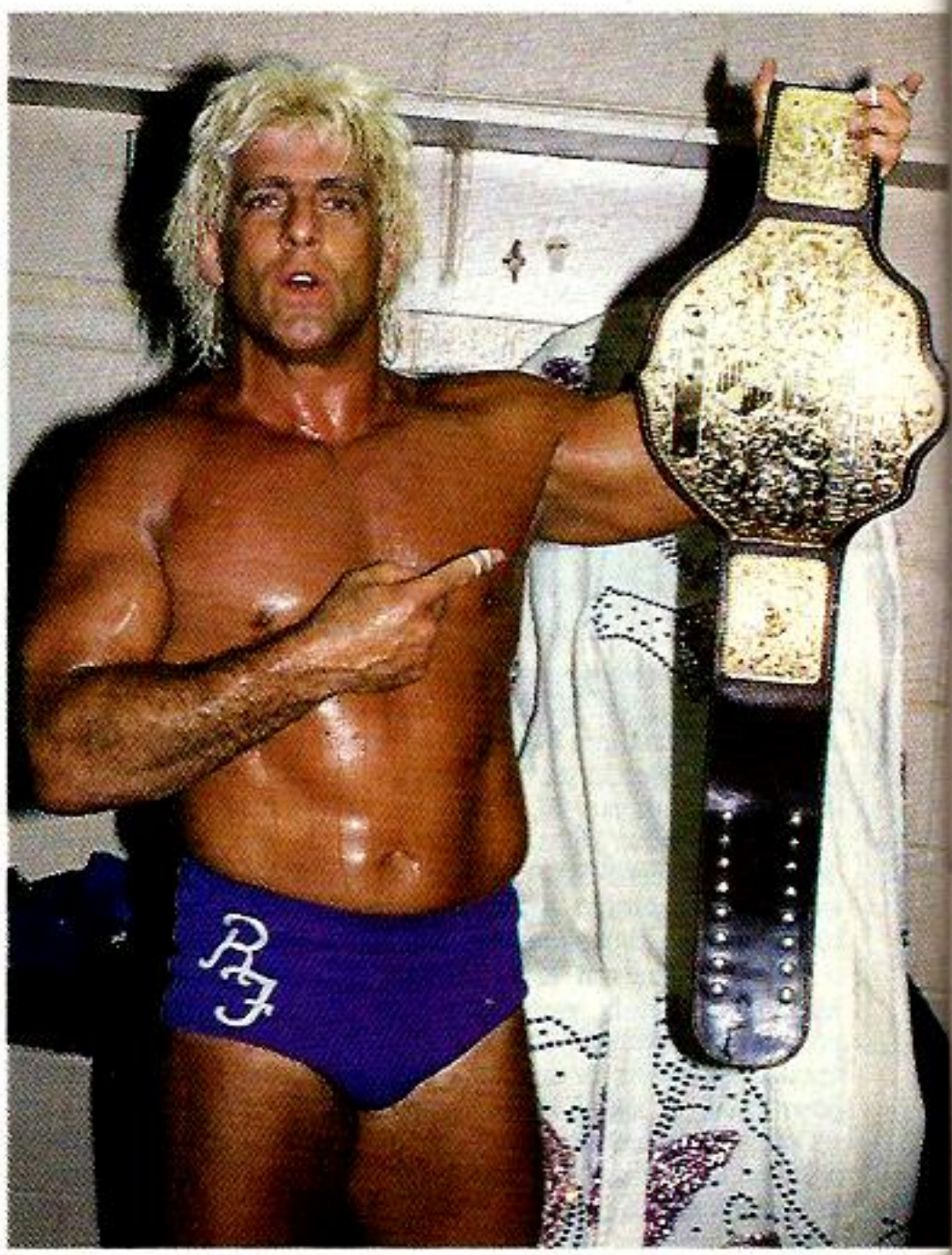
***

Perhaps there is no greater force than the power of positive thinking. The night that Flair lost the title, he went on with his plans for a large party. When questioned about this, Flair said, "This isn't a post-loss party, it's a pre-victory party. You know what they say, you don't drink beer, you rent it. Well, I didn't lose the belt. It's just on loan for a while."

Flair continued to maintain his heavy schedule, but not having the belt for a few weeks seemed to have a good effect on him mentally. The Bash had worn him down, and now Flair was starting to recover. The more than two years in the public spotlight was enjoyable, but everybody needs a vacation now and then. Many people now found him less irritable and easier to deal with.

Maybe this was because Flair seemed to know that he would get the title back. He remembered





To defeat a man of Ric Flair's caliber, a wrestler has to be at full strength. Rhodes, clutching his injured knee (above left), had virtually no chance. "I had no doubt that I would be champion again," Flair said, pointing to the diamond-studded belt in the dressing room (above right).

the broken ankle Rhodes suffered last fall and worked a plan around that left leg. Certainly, anybody who thinks that Dillon and Blanchard were in Kansas City to shop is being very naive.

***

The peaceful serenity of Babier State Park a distant memory, Flair began his evening in St. Louis with an early attack on Rhodes' left leg. A figure-four leglock followed, but Dusty fought back with elbowsmashes and appeared to take control. Ten minutes into the match, Rhodes put Flair in an abdominal stretch, but Flair broke it by kicking Dusty in the bad knee.

Both men were knocked out of the ring, but Flair got back in, and Rhodes recovered just in time. Flair put Dusty in the figure-four and the champion was in excruciating pain. Calling upon every last ounce of strength left in his body, Rhodes tried to reverse the hold, but Flair countered and stayed in control.

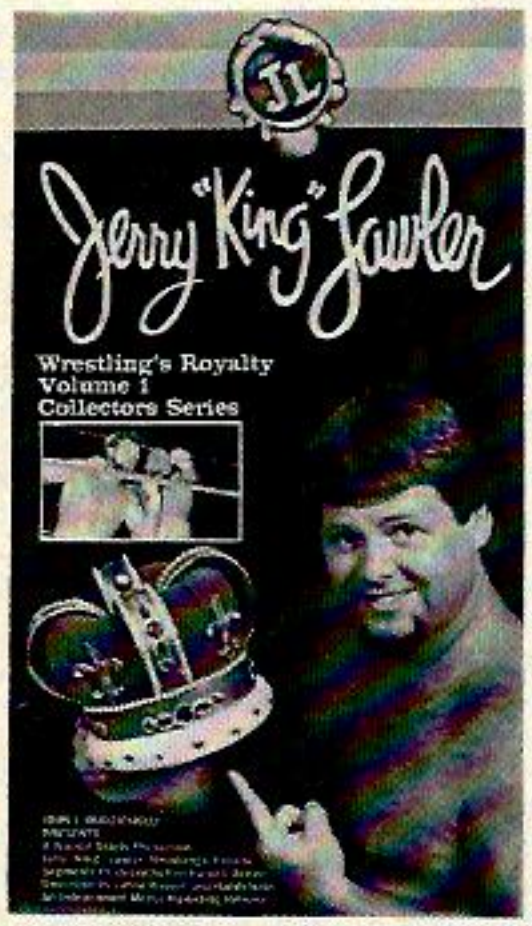
Then, Flair grabbed the second rope and pulled himself up, increasing the pressure on Rhodes' leg. Dusty writhed in pain and appeared ready to submit. A brilliant display of scientific wrestling followed. Flair let himself fall to the mat and pinned Dusty's shoulders to the mat. The referee counted out Rhodes and Flair had regained the title.

***

Ric Flair's three previous title reigns lasted 21 months, five months, and, 32 months. Dusty Rhodes' three title reigns have lasted five days, 88 days, and 14 days. Compare their ability, courage, and scruples all you want, but longevity is the truest test of champions. Rhodes has repeatedly failed this test.

Or as Flair said, "To be The Man, you gotta beat The Man." Like it or not, Ric Flair *is* The Man. The NWA World heavyweight belt belongs to him. ☐

LONG LIVE THE KING!



ONLY $39.95
(plus $5.00 Shipping & Handling)

Jerry Lawler, for years one of wrestling's most controversial and flamboyant men, is now the subject of his very own videotape from the award-winning producer of **Lords Of The Ring** and **Ringmasters.**

Included in this action-packed hour:

- **The Andy Kaufman Feud**
- **Showdown Match Against Terry Funk**
- **The Classic "Tupelo Concession Stand Brawl"**
- **Jimmy Hart Loser-Leave-Town Match**
- **Fire Attacks!**
- **Wrestling's First Music Video**
- **Plus Many Many More From The King's Greatest Matches**

Make check or money order payable and send to:

TV SPORTS
BOX 48
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571

Please check which format you want

☐ VHS ☐ Beta

Please rush me.....copies of **Jerry "King" Lawler**. I enclose $44.95 ($39.95 for the tape plus $5.00 postage & handling) for each tape I am ordering.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

For all orders except U.S. & Canada, you must add $2.00 for each tape ordered for boat mail, and $3.00 for each tape ordered for air mail. U.S. funds only. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

This MAGIC watch will keep you smiling!

This magical watch has a special message that reappears to keep a smile on your face. "HAVE A NICE DAY" will appear for 15 seconds, then fade into an exquisite black face showing only the hands for the time.

The fine Swiss movement is guaranteed for a full year. Gold or silver tone case and expansion band add the touch of luxury to this beautiful timepiece.

You must be completely satisfied with your watch or return it within fourteen days for your full money back.

Yes, I want a MAGICAL WATCH!

Enclose a check or money order for only $29.95 for each watch ordered plus $3.00 shipping and handling charge per order.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ___ Zip _____

	Qty.		Total
Gold tone smile watch	____	$29.95	____
Silver tone smile watch	____	$29.95	____
		Sub total	____
		Shipping and handling	$3.00
		Mass. residents add 5% sales tax	____
		Total enclosed	____

Mail to: ***Caravan One, Inc.***
P.O. Box 1077 Dept. A-46
Brookline, MA 02146

Interview 86

(Continued from page 31)

package of over 200 stations.

KING: So no other network has tried to take you on with their own wrestling setup?

McMAHON: No, I think that, although I must say, that since this is live, I did have a conversation recently with ABC . . .

KING: About the possibility of leaving NBC?

McMAHON: No, no, not the possibility of leaving . . .

KING: About doing something for them, too?

McMAHON: Please, Larry, you're going to get me in hot water here. I talked with ABC, they're interested perhaps in doing something with us on a very sparing basis. CBS, on the other hand, already has our cartoon show.

KING: Are you the Don King of wrestling?

McMAHON: The what?

KING: The Don King of wrestling.

McMAHON: No, I am the Walt Disney of wrestling.

KING: Better put. We'll take our next call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #4: How you doing, Larry and Vince? This is a great show. I wanted to just make a quick statement and ask Vince a very quick question. First of all, I follow wrestling very closely, and I think the WWF has kind of put entertainment above the sport, and it's all right for some people, but I'm a wrestling fan, and I prefer the wrestling. But it's still a great promotion. My question to Vince, and I really hope that you can be objective: Can you assess a potential bout between the [NWA] World heavyweight champion Ric Flair and your [WWF World] heavyweight champion Hulk Hogan? Can you tell me objectively how that bout could possibly come out and if it could be something that's happening in the future?

KING: We have two heavyweight champions, is that what he's referring . . .

McMAHON: No. Again he's making reference to a very regional promotion which is Ric Flair, which is a Jim Crockett promotion, one of our competitors as such. But that match would never, never happen, because to make a match like that would be . . . notwithstanding the fact that Jim Crockett is a very good promoter, let me say that first and foremost. Some of the athletes involved in Jim Crockett Promotions are excellent athletes, and Ric Flair happens to be one of them.

KING: Why wouldn't it happen then?

McMAHON: Well, it wouldn't happen from the standpoint, from a national standpoint and an international standpoint. For us, to make a match of that nature would almost give what is now a very small regional promoter the credibility that he's looking for in terms of . . .

KING: You don't want to give him that, it's not like the WBA and WBC in boxing.

McMAHON: No, it's not really. We're competing, you know, and I want to keep that vast disparity, that difference . . .

KING: Would you like to get this kid, what's his name?

McMAHON: Ric Flair?

KING: Would you like to get him with the WWF?

McMAHON: Sure would. He's a fine athlete.

KING: Then let's take it into that presumption. How well would he do if he were signed with you and fighting Hogan?

McMAHON: Well, you know, again, it's mere supposition, but if he came to the WWF I doubt very seriously if a match like that would be made, because Ric Flair, where he does have fabulous athletic skills, is about 225 pounds I think and about 5'10". Notwithstanding his scientific skill, I just don't think he can measure up to Hogan who is 6'8" and 330 pounds. *[EDITOR'S NOTE: At this point, a highlights tape of Hulk Hogan was shown for a few seconds.]*

KING: The people love him, right?

McMAHON: They really do. This man is a symbol in so much more than just wrestling, I think he's almost a symbol of Americana itself.

KING: In what way? In a Rambo-ist way?

McMAHON: Not so much in a Rambo-ish way, no. Because he's unabashed to be a patriot, unabashed to be an American, and I like that about him and I think the fans like that about him.

KING: And that's very in, now, right?

McMAHON: Yes, it's in, but Hogan was doing it long before it was in. Another thing that he was saying, and always has, is, "say your prayers." You don't often hear somebody, especially an athlete like that. I don't know of any athlete in any pro sport or any entertainer that goes around saying, "Say your prayers, eat your vitamins," in other words, take care of yourself, "Be true to yourself, and your family, and your country." I mean, there's not a heck of a lot left if you can do all those things.

KING: How many nights a year will he fight, will he wrestle?

McMAHON: Oh, I would say, on an average out of a year, probably 50, and that's a very, very tough pace.

KING: Once a week.

McMAHON: About once a week, yes.

KING: Others will do more, right?

McMAHON: Yes, yes.

KING: Let's go to the next caller. Hello.

CALLER #5: Yes, I have a comment and a question for Vince, my man. First the comment. I feel the same way as caller number one; Saturday night matches are so bad. And my question is: Why Bob Backlund never did get a title match with Hulk Hogan, a rematch, because Bob Backlund was the former champion. And Bob Backlund said that Vince McMahon wanted him to change the color of his hair

(Continued on page 54)

ON SALE NOW

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

SUPER COLOR SPECIAL #7

Featuring
FULL-COLOR Features On

RICK STEAMBOAT
Is He Snakebit In His Quest For The Intercontinental Belt?

STEVE "DR. DEATH" WILLIAMS:
His Prescription For Greatness

PLUS ...

A LIFE SIZE 22" x 32" *8 PAGE* SUPER CENTERFOLD OF . . . THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS: SOLID GOLD

Get Yours Today!

On Sale At Newsstands Everywhere

Interview 86

(Continued from page 52)

and be a rulebreaker, in other words a bad guy.

McMAHON: I'm not too sure what the question was, but let me respond . . .

KING: Why don't you let him fight again?

McMAHON: Well, Bob Backlund, first of all, is retired. Secondly, for Bob Backlund to say what he has said quite often, about some sort of scenario of me wanting him to dye his hair, which is absurd, and want to be a rulebreaker, which is even more absurd. Bob Backlund is a fabulous athlete, a former all-American wrestling champion, he was a credit to the World Wrestling Federation when he was the titleholder at that time, very, very scientific. Had very, very little charisma, for what that's worth, but an excellent champion. But he retired and has never been heard from since. Except that he tried wrestling, I believe, for some of our competitors, and gave that up.

KING: Little charisma, though, would turn you off, wouldn't it? I mean, you're in show business, you need someone with charisma, so it would be logical. As I hear that, it would be logical for you to say to someone who doesn't have a lot of charisma, "Dye your hair purple, do something! You're a terrific wrestler, but we gotta put people in here, not just . . . we can get the guy from Iowa who won the Olympics in a four-foot box. We need guys . . ."

McMAHON: Not everyone, Larry. Again, it's a product mix, it's a marketing mix. And not everyone has to have huge sums of charisma. Certainly Bob Backlund never had it. But that's all right. He was a terrific scientific wrestler.

KING: People came to see him?

McMAHON: Sure they came to see him, because the people he was facing, they had all the charisma. So there's no problem with people having no charisma in the WWF. We're not looking for each wrestler, each performer . . .

KING: Everyone doesn't have to be a performer, then?

McMAHON: No, no. You have to have a nice marketing mix.

KING: We'll take our next call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #6: Hi, my name is Ray. Vince?

McMAHON: Yes.

CALLER #6: Yeah, there's a lot of us out here without charisma and we'd like somebody up there representing us. First, I'd like to congratulate you for recognizing that there's things beyond just the wrestling matches to make money on. With the videotapes on WrestleMania and things like that, I was wondering, are you planning any videotapes on training programs, like Paul Orndorff coming out with something?

KING: Like a Jane Fonda.

McMAHON: Yes we are, as a matter of fact. We're planning on a lot of things of that nature, which are not quite ready to release yet. As a matter of fact, Hulk is working on one now that's not probably the market you're looking for, but strictly for kids. And there are some other things as well that we're working out.

KING: Do kids come to the matches?

McMAHON: Oh, sure.

KING: A lot?

McMAHON: Yes.

KING: Teenagers or below teenagers?

McMAHON: Teenagers, below teenagers—again the demographic is a very, very wide one. It's Americana.

KING: Before we take our next call. Are you a little worried, that one thing Americans are, we are faddish. For example, video games are gone. They were the hottest thing in the world; they're gone. Discos. What happened to discos? Are you a little worried that one day, you're gonna wake up, and it's gone? And they like tiddlywinks again.

McMAHON: No, for the same reason that we talked about. Wrestling will always be around. It always was around.

KING: Yeah, but are you worried that it will diminish greatly?

McMAHON: No, because of a number of factors. It's only diminished if, in fact, we don't do our job. If there's not enough of the athletic skills employed, or enough of the charisma, or enough of the marketing mix, and things of that nature. It would be a crime for that to happen, and it won't happen.

KING: One of the things I would think you're gonna need is new attractions all the time . . .

McMAHON: All the time.

KING: . . . to keep the interest going . . .

McMAHON: Absolutely.

KING: . . . because we can't stay at the pace with the same people, right?

McMAHON: That's exactly right.

KING: So you have to be looking around for young people.

McMAHON: New talent, young talent, European talent, new marketing techniques, who knows where this thing is gonna go.

KING: Take our next call for Vince McMahon of the World Wrestling Federation. Hello.

CALLER #7: How you doing, Larry. Vince, how are you?

McMAHON: Well, thank you.

CALLER #7: I'm 19 years old, and I've been watching wrestling since I was real small. And I was wondering, if I wanted to get in touch with you, Vince, or some other wrestler, how could I do that?

KING: In touch for what purpose?

CALLER #7: Maybe for myself, to get into professional wrestling, or maybe just to talk to some of the wrestlers.

KING: Well, that's a two-pronged question. Are you good enough to be a wrestler?

CALLER #7: I think I am.

KING: All right, what should he do, if he wanted to be a wrestler?

McMAHON: First of all, I'd like to discourage you from being a pro wrestler. It's a very, very tough life. There's hardly any family life to it. These fellows are on the road so much, all over the country, all over the world. We had a tour that just left yesterday for Australia, one just got back from the Middle East. So there's very, very little family life. There's a great deal of travel, and all of the hassles that go with that. It may sound to some viewers and callers as, you know, travel is romantic and it's this and it's that, but the lumps and bumps that you have to take, all of that plus no family life, and it's not a very good life. It is rough. It's very rewarding financially, but it is rough.

KING: Where do you get your new people from?

McMAHON: Uh, from *(laughs)*, from our competitive groups.

KING: You raid them.

McMAHON: Yes, we raid them.

KING: In other words, you see a good regional wrestler in North Carolina, you like him, he's winning some bouts, he's exciting to watch, you go sign him.

McMAHON: Absolutely. Sure, sure, we'll go after him.

KING: When you sign someone, do they get a yearly guarantee, is that the way it works?

McMAHON: No, they don't, no.

KING: No guarantee?

McMAHON: They get no guarantee.

KING: Why sign with you?

McMAHON: Because it's the guarantee of opportunity, that's why they sign.

KING: In other words, they get paid per match . . .

McMAHON: That's correct.

KING: Then as they start to do well and become more of an attraction, eventually . . . I mean, Hogan's under contract with a guarantee, right?

McMAHON: Not with a guarantee.

KING: Hulk Hogan has no guarantee?

McMAHON: Doesn't need one. All he needs is opportunity. Any performer . . . it's like playing golf, tennis, whatever you want it to be. Give them the opportunity to perform, that's what performance should be.

KING: Yeah, but I could be on the PGA tour and earn zip.

McMAHON: Yes you could. And there are a lot of wrestlers that are touring the WWF that earn—not zip, but comparatively speaking they earn zip as compared to the megastars.

KING: In other words, you work your way up, and once you're up you don't need the guarantee?

McMAHON: You don't, no. All you need is opportunity. And that's what we can give that no one else can give: extraordinary opportunity.

KING: Take our next call on *Home Team Sportsbeat* for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #8: Vince, I got one question for you. What's the story with Andre the Giant?

McMAHON: *(to King)* Well, uh, you don't know this.

KING: I don't.

McMAHON: Just like you didn't know about Jake "The Snake."

KING: Correct.

McMAHON: In any event, we have a situation here with Andre the Giant, who's been suspended.

KING: By whom?

McMAHON: By Jack Tunney, who is the president of the WWF. I'm president of Titan Sports, a little bit different, we'll get into that a little later.

KING: There are two presidents?

McMAHON: Well, no, it's only one president.

KING: It's him or you?

McMAHON: It's him.

KING: Then why am I calling you the president?

McMAHON: I don't know. You got the information.

KING: What is your title?

McMAHON: I'm president of Titan Sports.

KING: Which owns the World Wrestling Federation.

McMAHON: *Produces* the WWF.

KING: Tunney works for you.

McMAHON: Tunney works for me? No, Tunney works for himself.

KING: And he's the commissioner?

McMAHON: President.

KING: And he suspended . . .?

McMAHON: And he's on third.

KING: He what?

McMAHON: First. Change from first to second. But in any event . . . what was the question?

KING: What happened to . . .

McMAHON: *(laughs)*

KING: All right, he was suspended. Why?

McMAHON: The reason Andre the Giant was suspended, not to make light of Andre's suspension, because—no pun intended there, Andre weighs 500 pounds—but it's very important to Andre, very serious, and to the WWF as well. Andre failed

(Continued on page 56)

THE McMAHON INTERVIEW: A REBUTTAL

For a while, back in 1984, Hulk Hogan wasn't the begin all and end all in the WWF. In the opinion of some people, Hogan wasn't even the most popular wrestler in the federation. That distinction arguably belonged to Sgt. Slaughter.

Slaughter, formerly among the most hated men in the WWF, stole the hearts of the fans in one memorable instant when he and The Iron Sheik crossed paths between matches in the walkway between the dressing room and the ring. The eye contact they made was the foreboding of what would be a feud of violent proportions between a former Marine Corps sergeant and an Iranian wrestler, whose countrymen just a couple of years earlier had held 63 Americans hostages for 444 days.

McMahon holds the mike between Slaughter and Pat Patterson, who have words with each other back in 1981.

The Slaughter-Iron Sheik battles were looked forward to with more anticipation than Hulk Hogan's WWF title matches. Slaughter, who not long before had paper cups thrown at him in the ring, could stand in that same ring and rally 22,000 fans to their feet to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

At the height of his popularity, though, Slaughter left the WWF and began wrestling for the "Pro Wrestling U.S.A" group and the AWA. The fans missed him horribly, and he missed the fans, but the Sergeant always did what he felt he had to do. And leaving the WWF was one of those things. "I left the WWF for a lot of reasons," Slaughter said when contacted by *Wrestling 86* to respond to Vince McMahon's interview with Larry King. "I thought Vince McMahon and I had more of a friendship than an employer/employee relationship. When certain promises he made weren't kept, I felt let down."

Slaughter, in addition to holding the Americas title in the AWA and wrestling for the National Wrestling Federation, is under contract to Hasbro Toy Company and the sydicated *G.I. Joe* cartoon series. These companies, he said, would like him to go back to the WWF, where they could benefit from the added publicity he would receive. While Slaughter says that he would return to the WWF, he is not anxiously pursuing that end. "I would not be against going back, I would consider it," he said. "Who knows? Tomorrow I might be there. But I wouldn't go back under the same arrangements. I don't think it will ever happen because there are too many ego problems over there."

Also asked by *Wrestling 86* to respond to quotes from McMahon in the King interview were Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka and NWA promoter Jim Crockett.

Said Snuka, whom McMahon referred to as a "basket case": "If I'm a basket case, then he's not big enough to fit in my basket. . .I'm surprised that a supposedly intelligent man would say something like that about me on television."

Said Crockett, whose promotion was called "very regional" by McMahon: "I'm not going to dignify someone that dumb with a comment, rebuttal, or anything."

—Stu Saks

Interview 86

(Continued from page 55)

to appear for a date, and it happened more than once. And when you fail to appear for a date—action was taken, and he was suspended. Andre, I must say, can be, from time to time, extremely arrogant. Andre is having this looked into from a legal standpoint. And, nonetheless, Andre felt that the suspension was totally unwarranted, and, in fact, if he'd missed two dates, it'd be the first two dates he'd missed in, like, 10 years of wrestling. But, nonetheless, he missed them. We're trying to determine why he missed them. But he did not have the courtesy to show up for the hearing that took place. As a result of that, when Andre did not show up for the hearing, even though there was probably a logical explanation as to why he missed the two shots, there was no other recourse but to suspend him.

KING: Did that anger you?

McMAHON: It upset me greatly, because Andre is an extraordinary attraction.

KING: And did you call Tunney or Andre?

McMAHON: Both.

KING: And what did Andre say to you?

McMAHON: Andre felt that, after all that he had done for the WWF, in terms of representing the WWF as an ambassador at large, more or less, worldwide, he felt that it was totally unjust, and unless the ruling was reversed, he's gonna refuse to wrestle.

KING: What did Tunney say? He had no choice.

McMAHON: He had no alternative.

KING: So you're between a rock and a hard place.

McMAHON: That's exactly where we are.

KING: We'll take our next call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #9: I'd like to ask Vince a couple questions. Why don't you ever see Roddy Piper anymore on Saturday morning? And when will the next *Saturday Night's Main Event* be?

KING: Okay, thank you. Roddy Piper, Saturday morning.

McMAHON: Let me answer it the other way. *Saturday Night's Main Event,* the next one is in September, around the 20th or something like that, as I recall. Roddy Piper has been making a film. Hollywood wants all of our stars.

KING: A genuine, regular, full-length motion picture.

McMAHON: Genuine, full-length.

KING: Will he return upon completion of his filming duties?

McMAHON: Yes. The filming, as a matter of fact, is over with. I had a conversation with Piper just the other day, and he's very much looking forward, now that his body has healed up, he's very much looking forward to returning.

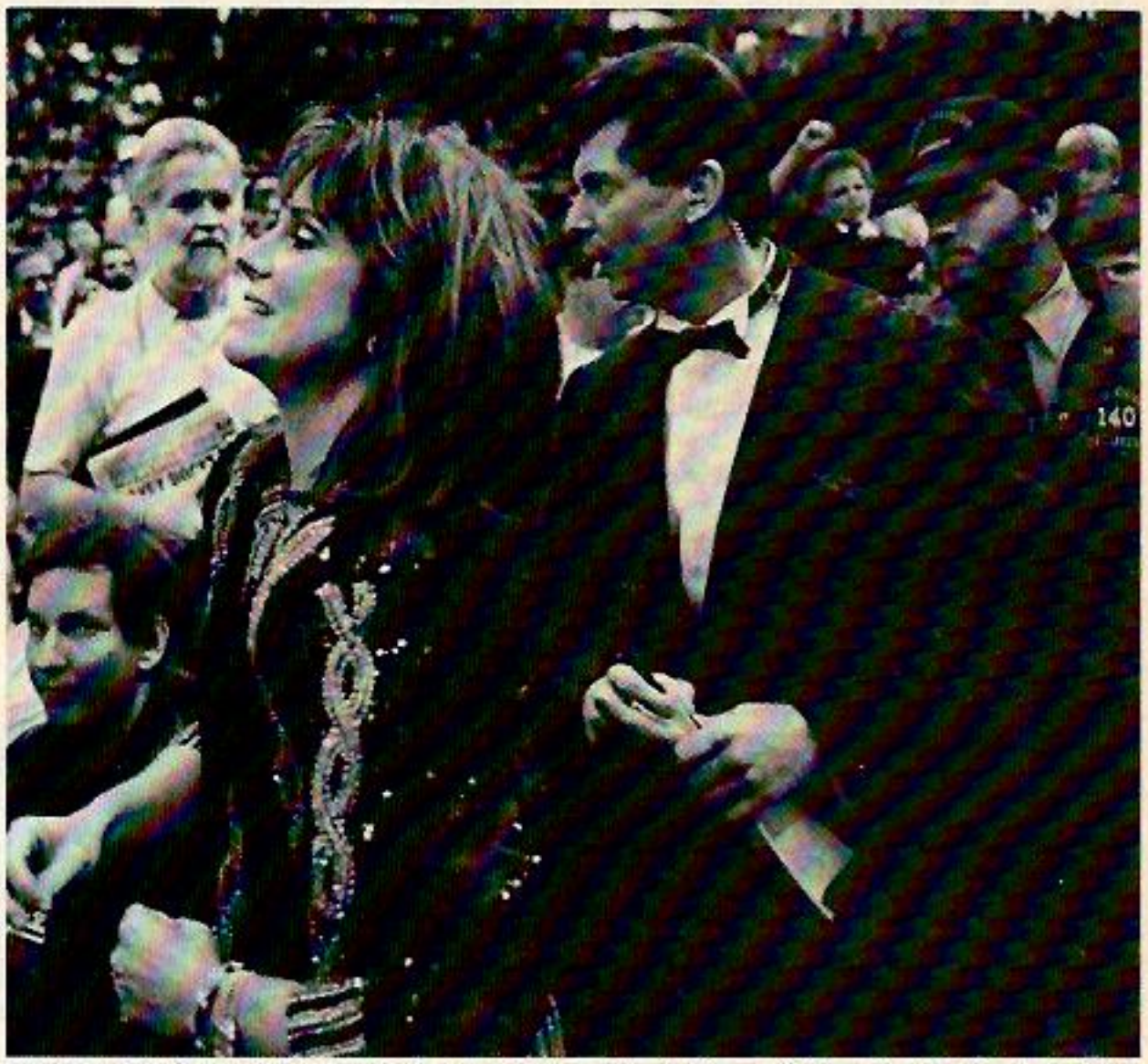
KING: Do these people have agents?

McMAHON: Yes, some of them do, yes.

KING: Like Hulk, does he have an agent?

McMAHON: Yes.

KING: You deal with agents, then. So you've entered that part of management as well. You have to deal with representatives of talent.



McMahon trails Susan St. James to the broadcast position at Nassau Coliseum before the start of this past April's WrestleMania 2. McMahon hired 25 celebrites to try to enhance the largest wrestling extravaganza in history.

McMAHON: Yes we do.

KING: We'll take our next call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #10: Yeah. Vince, why don't you consider Ric Flair a world champion when he's beaten "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and Greg "The Hammer" Valentine in the NWA?

McMAHON: Well, as I mentioned before, Ric is a fine athlete, and I understand a heck of a guy, I don't know him personally. I think just to have defeated two of the stars of the WWF does not necessarily make him of championship recognition. And again, you have to understand the disparity between our organization and *all* other regional wrestling organizations, of which Ric Flair is a part of a regional promotion.

KING: That's the difference between this and boxing, right? In other words, this young man rises up, he's gonna have to be with the WWF, or he's not gonna fight Hulk Hogan, right?

McMAHON: Sure, sure.

KING: You would like to get him for the WWF?

McMAHON: Sure would. He's a fine talent.

KING: So you wouldn't mind if he continues to win and impress, because some day you feel you're gonna get him anyway.

McMAHON: I would say so. I would say it's a very good possibility, yes.

KING: Are you annoyed that you're not covered on the sports pages?

McMAHON: Not at all. Let's face it, I've said before, in categorizing what the WWF is, it's sports entertainment. There is no heading in television, except for our heading, and we call ourselves sports entertainment. There's a sports show, there's an entertainment. In the newspaper itself there's an entertainment section, there's a sports page. There's nothing in there of sports entertainment. We're very, very unique. We're in a very, very unique category, so sometimes we're covered in sports pages in some markets, and other times we're covered in the entertainment section, and other times both.

KING: Take our next call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #11: Yes, Vince. On this program last night, on Florida wrestling, they had a personal appearance of Bob Backlund, and he stated that he was not retired from wrestling, and that you had run him out of the WWF, and that the only way he would return to professional wrestling was if he got a title shot with Hulk Hogan.

KING: Aha!

McMAHON: Well, see, there you go again, you know?

KING: Well, we need a response.

McMAHON: I didn't even know about this.

Thank you for bringing it to my attention. I don't know whether that was live or Memorex, as far as—was that on tape, or what?

KING: Well, did he ever say in the past that you had run him out of wrestling?

McMAHON: Bob Backund, I'll say before, was one of the finest athletes that we ever had in the WWF. Now I don't know whether Mr. Backlund has, unfortunately, struck too many turnbuckles in his life, or just what, and I can't speak to that. Bob, when he was champion, was exemplary in every way, in everything you'd ever want to see in a champion. After he lost the title, something happened to Bob Backlund, and whatever Bob says, if you want to believe Bob, that's fine.

KING: You're still an admirer of his?

McMAHON: Absolutely.

KING: This, I think, will be the last call for Vince McMahon. Hello.

CALLER #12: Yeah, I'd like to ask Vince two questions. First, is Greg "The Hammer" Valentine related to the ex-national TV champ Johnny Valentine from back in the early '60s, late '50s? And second, how much longer will Hulk Hogan be the champion?

KING: Two good questions.

McMAHON: Yes he is, he is the son of Johnny Valentine. As far as facially, the resemblance is, of course, quite striking. Physically, Johnny was considerably taller than Greg is. That answers that one, and he's very, very proud of his dad, as well he should be. Johnny Valentine was an extraordinary athlete.

KING: And how much longer will Hulk Hogan wrestle?

McMAHON: I would say—be champion, I think was the question, but it goes hand in hand. I would say not for much longer, because Hulk Hogan is probably keeping a pace like no other champion before him. Both in terms of not just his wrestling schedule, but his schedule in terms of the films, in terms of television appearances, and on and on and on. I think he's burning himself out, I can't stop him, and anyone—he's only human, and I think that if he burns himself out, and continues the pace that he is currently continuing, I think that in a very short period of time, Hulk Hogan will probably be defeated for the title.

KING: And that would be by whom?

McMAHON: I have no idea.

KING: If you had to pick among your crop of wrestlers that you think could be the next champ, it would be whom? An objective pick, not a subjective pick.

McMAHON: Jeez, I wouldn't hazard a guess, really. There are too many qualified athletes that could be champion.

KING: So it wouldn't shock you if any one of five or six or seven guys . . .

McMAHON: No. Any one of 20.

KING: Vince, it's been a great pleasure meeting you.

McMAHON: Thank you very much, it's my pleasure. ☐

PREMIUM BACK ISSUES

WRESTLER ANNUAL & PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

The back issues available in this ad are the top of our line. All of these magazines contain a color section, and many were newsstand sellouts. They are priced at only $3.00 each, so don't delay, order today.

WRESTLER ANNUAL

This special collection of the most requested stories published in *The Wrestler* includes two fabulous color pinups in each issue.

☐ FALL/83 ☐ WINTER/83 ☐ SUMMER/84 ☐ FALL/84 ☐ WINTER/84

☐ SPRING/85 ☐ SUMMER/85 ☐ FALL/85 ☐ WINTER/85 ☐ SPRING/86

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED ANNUAL

Each collection includes a spectacular four page full-color section.

☐ SPRING/83 ☐ SUMMER/83 ☐ WINTER/83 ☐ SPRING/84 ☐ SUMMER/84 ☐ FALL/84

☐ WINTER/84 ☐ SPRING/85 ☐ SUMMER/85 ☐ FALL/85 ☐ WINTER/85 ☐ SPRING/86

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:

T.V. SPORTS
BOX 48
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571

ONLY $3.00 EACH

Please send me the back issues I've checked. I enclose $_____ as payment in full.

PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY

In case of a sellout, indicate substitute choice: _____

Name _____

Address _____ **Apt.** _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

For all orders except the U.S. and Canada, you *must add* one dollar for every back issue ordered for boat mail, and two dollars for every back issue ordered for airmail. U.S. funds only.

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery

BEST BY MAIL
Rates: Write National, Box 5, Sarasota, FL 33578

MUSCLES! Maximize your bodybuilding results with incredible new system. Guaranteed! Free Details. VRT, Box 93026, Dept. NM9-86, Milwaukee, WI 53202

BENCH Press 250, 300, 350 lbs.! Weight Training For Power. $10 to: Powercom, P.O. Box 3465, Fairfax, VA 22038

SWITCHBLADE Kit. Nato Military, 8" open, $25.00. James Riffle, 533(A) Cow Canyon Rd., Durango, CO 81301

14K GOLD Jewelry. Free List. Charles Gems, 102(VS) South McLish, Tishomingo, OK 73460

LOTTERIES - SWEEPSTAKES

WIN MILLIONS!!! Play Illinois Lottery!! Send $5.00 for Service Forms. (Refundable). J&H Ltd., 3 Golf Center, Suite 311/325, Hoffmann Estates, IL 60195

LOTTERIES! Every state plus foreign. Complete entry information - $2.00. Southwest, Box 5276, Chula Vista, CA 92012

OF INTEREST TO ALL

LOANS, Fast, Confidential. Any Amount/Purpose. Refused Elsewhere? Try Us! TRP, Box 245(SV), Binghamton, NY 13903

RECEIVE Free $1,000, $5,000 or more grant from your government. Amazing report reveals complete details. Only $4.00. Wise, 200 So. Meridian, Suite 225(VS), Indianapolis, IN 46225

IRS TACTICS Exposed! Read The Censor! 4 stamps bring copy. Free advertising! Kies Publishing, Box 295, San Fernando, CA 91341

GET CREDIT Cards. Details $2.00. Guaranteed. Box 5242(VS), Lake Charles, LA 70606

600% PROFIT! Jewelry below wholesale. Buy direct. (301)495-9523.

MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

HOMEWORKERS get paid $2,000.00 weekly! Locate missing people with phone books. Research! Not Sales! $9.95 to: Bright, 206-6th St.(VS), Fairview, NJ 07022

$1,500 MONTHLY Home Mailing! Kashking, Box 6869, Boston, MA 02102

MONEY Making Opportunities. LSASE: Nutshell Sales, 428(VS) Knight Rd., Ambler, PA 19002

CAN YOU buy Jeeps*Cars*4x4's seized in drug raids for under $100.00? Call for facts today! (615)269-6701, Ext. 2014

PERSONAL - MISCELLANEOUS

ATTRACT Girls Instantly! Regardless of your looks. Pheromone spray seems to lure them to you without their knowing it. Details: Attractant-10, Suite 250(VS), 781 West Oakland Park Blvd., FL 33311

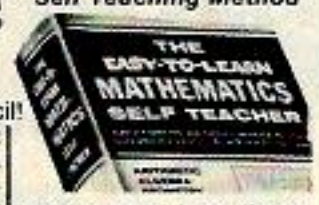
THE DATING BANK, meet new singles, your area, write: POB 1549(BR), Winston-Salem, NC 27102

ATTRACT Beautiful Women Instantly! Free Details. Synergistics, P.O. Box 7248(VS), Federal Way, WA 98003

STIMULANTS & DIET AIDS
WE BEAT ANY ADVERTISED PRICE
$10.00 to $40.00 Per Thousand
$5.00 to $10.00 Per Hundred
Red and Clear • Pink Hearts • 357 Magnums • 20/20's • 30/30's
Mini Pink Hearts • Thin or Thick White Tablets • More Items Avail
412-471-PILL or 412-281-7455
NATIONWIDE PURVEYORS, INC.
P.O. Box 8462, Dept. P-8, Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Void Where Prohibited By Law

WEAK in MATH?
New Short Cut Math Skills in Only Weeks —10 minutes a day . . . for Higher Pay Jobs with the Easy-To-Learn Self Teaching Method

BONUS! with Math book **Pocket "Math-Wizard"**
Get the Right Answers in a Flash Without Paper or Pencil!
Instant answers convert fractions into decimals, percentages and reverse. Plus other tough math problems solved in a jiffy!



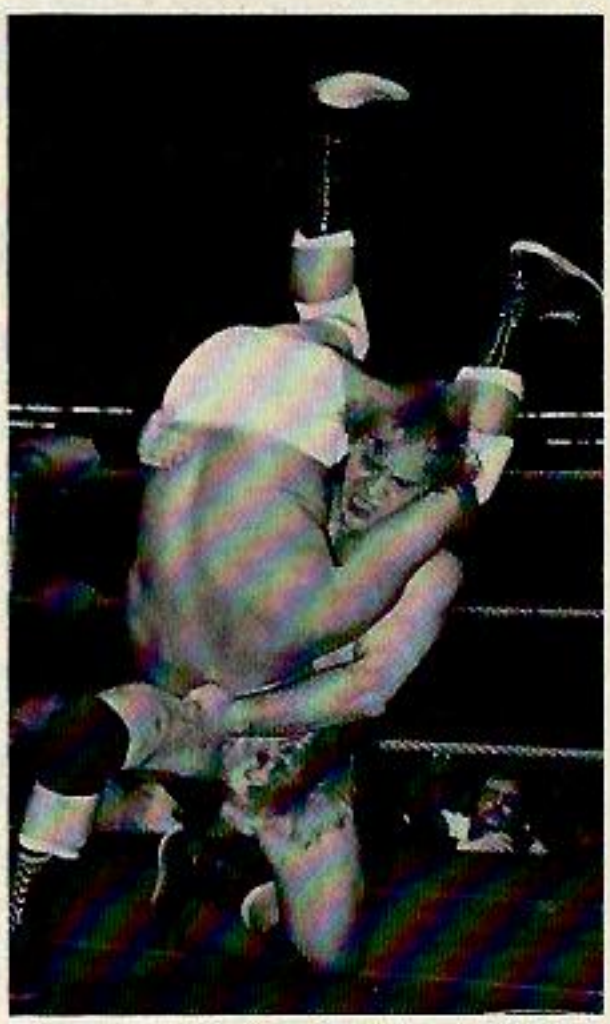
One volume contains all subjects—arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry through calculus. Tackle any math problem even if you never finished high school. Basic and advanced math taught in terms of everyday experience. Clearly presented step-by-step and illustrated. Learn theory and practice from "scratch", "brush-up", or reference. Summary makes review easy. Track your progress. Catch errors instantly. Pass civil service and job tests. A must for all office, sales, industrial jobs, home finances. Send $9.95 plus 95¢ for shipping. 30 day Money Back Guarantee.
VALCO • Dept 343 • Box 2012, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10802

BLANK PHOTO ID CARDS
Make laminated Photo IDs on any typewriter. All materials furnished for 5 IDs.
Good In All States and Canada
– 5 FREE BIRTH CERTIFICATES –
Fast Service • Moneyback Guarantee
For Rush C.O.D., call 1-904-396-1744
CARDINAL PUBLISHING, DEPT. B104
2071 Emerson, Box 5290 • Jacksonville, FL 32207

5 FOR $10

Crossfire

(Continued from page 18)



Zbyszko executes a shoulderbreaker against AWA World champion Nick Bockwinkel. Larry is out to prove that Bockwinkel is not a deserving champion.

EE: *You don't expect the fans to believe that, do you? Winning a world title is the goal of every professional wrestler.*

LZ: It hasn't been mine until today. Previously, I've been too busy engaged in feuds, attempting to teach mongrels like Sammartino, Jimmy Snuka, Scott LeDoux, and Bockwinkel some basic tenets of life. Now that Bockwinkel has the crown, I feel it's time to own it. The timing is perfect.

BA: But how do you plan to do that? After all, the new Nick Bock . . .

EE: *Put a lid on it, Apter. Talking about a new Nick Bockwinkel is like talking about new hair growing on your head. It just doesn't exist. Now, I think the question is, how do you plan to win the title that you so richly deserve and spare Bockwinkel's life at the same time? Or is that not a factor?*

LZ: I see no reason to be concerned about the health of Bockwinkel. The man has already overstayed his welcome and should be pleased that he's managed to fool the fans and overachieve in this sport for so long. I would imagine that it all comes with having the right connections. It's no secret that Bockwinkel is friends with Blackburn and the officials, all those guys. I spoke to Hansen just a day before that match in Denver and he was going out of his mind because he thought that Bockwinkel had the officials in his hip pocket. That didn't surprise me, but if he ever tries to do the same thing to me, I won't walk out. I'll just tear his head out of its socket and do the same to Blackburn.

BA: Do I take this to mean that you're threatening the president of the AWA?

LZ: And Apter, I'll tear your scrawny head out of your pencil neck, too.

EE: *Well put, Larry.*

LZ: Thank you. I feel no responsibility to spare injury to those who care to get in my way. Sammartino learned that, and Bockwinkel did, too, but obviously, he has a short memory. I need not come up with a new strategy to defeat Bockwinkel. I have done it many times in the past and all I need do is repeat what I have done before.

BA: But from what I can tell, Bockwinkel has changed his style. He's become a much smarter wrestler, yet he's retained his old aggressiveness. Perhaps the old tactics won't work anymore.

LZ: Total nonsense. Just more journalistic gibberish about strategy and style and all that crap. Listen, Apter, you wouldn't know this because you've never had the guts to get into the ring, but when two men wrestle, all that counts is their natural instincts. You can't change that, Apter, and that's why Bockwinkel is going to find himself in a pretty familiar position. Lying prone on the mat, gasping for air, his body futilely trying to fight back. The title lost, death imminent.

EE: *How poetic! Certainly, if any man in wrestling has the ability to fulfill this prophecy, it's you. I find it amusing sometimes how men like Apter, with all their years in the sport, fail to grasp the simple, basic facts of wrestling. It's certainly been a pleasure speaking with you. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we say goodbye?*

LZ: Ah, the hell with goodbyes. It's time to say hello. Hello to the new AWA champion of the world. Yours truly. □

You Decide

(Continued from page 45)

and, instead of suffering the embarrassment, decided not to wrestle. In this case, Hansen deserved to be stripped of the title.

"There's really one more point I must make," said Blackburn. "The association must rule the champion, as opposed to the champion ruling the association. He signed for the match and must live up to his obligations. We are the governing body. Hansen cannot make the guidelines."

So be it, but there are many people who feel that stripping Hansen of his title was too harsh. A man works hard to win a world title, and must work even harder to keep it. For six months, Hansen defended his title in a way that did honor to the AWA. He took on all challengers and, although he often was disqualified, proved that he was the best the AWA had to offer. He was never been beaten in the ring.

And, of course, there is the dark side of this picture, the possibility that Blackburn acted out of prejudice due to his past problems with Hansen. By no means is Hansen an easy person to get along with. He has often gotten involved in shouting matches with AWA officials and was once seen threatening Blackburn. In addition, his frequent disqualifications are frowned upon by Blackburn, who considers this an affront to the credibility of the AWA.

You must decide if Stan Hansen should have been stripped of the AWA World championship. Although it is too late for the decision to be changed, your input could have a bearing on future situations. Review the pros and cons we've established, and judge for yourself if Blackburn acted properly or was too harsh on Hansen. Try to be objective.

Fill out the ballot below on this vital issue and return it promptly. Results will be forwarded to AWA officials, Nick Bockwinkel, and, if he can be reached, Stan Hansen, and will appear in the Spring issue of *Wrestling 87.*

HANSEN SHOULD HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THE AWA TITLE

- **Irresponsibility.** Hansen showed up for the match, but decided to leave with no explanation. As champion, Hansen had a responsibility to the fans, who paid good money to see the match, and the belt, a recognized symbol of the AWA. He at least should have offered an excuse, but did not.
- **Precedent.** The AWA has used its discretionary powers to award titles in the past, such as when Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura were awarded the AWA tag team belts when Verne Gagne, vacationing overseas, failed to appear to defend the belt with his partner, Mad Dog Vachon.
- **Control.** An association must take charge of its wrestlers, not the other way around. By acting the way he did, Hansen was challenging the authority of Blackburn and the AWA. They answered back in kind. In addition, by signing a contract to wrestle, Hansen had an obligation to appear for the match. By walking out on his obligation, Hansen was, in effect, walking out on the title.

HANSEN SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THE TITLE

- **Overpunishment.** Stripping Hansen of the title was too harsh a punishment, especially since this was a first offense. Bockwinkel should have been awarded the victory, but not the title, and given another title shot. Hansen should have been reprimanded by the AWA, and possibly dealt a heavy fine and suspension.
- **Never beaten.** According to the rules of virtually every wrestling federation in the country (the exception being the World Class), a title can only change hands in the event of pinfall or submission, not a disqualification. Hansen wasn't pinned, so do his actions fall under the category of submission or disqualification? Or neither? This is a question that must be answered.
- **Prejudice.** It is no secret that Blackburn was not fond of Hansen and had had problems with him in the past. Perhaps he saw the chance to strip Hansen of the belt and he seized the opportunity. □

ANTI-AMERICAN WRESTLERS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO COMPETE

The volatile and very emotional question, posed in the Summer issue, of whether anti-American wrestlers should be allowed to compete, resulted in one of our closest ballotings ever. Fifty-six percent of the respondents said that anti-American wrestlers should not be allowed to compete and 44 percent said that they should.

In the final analysis, the question came down to Constitutional rights, the right of a person to earn a living, the effects these anti-American wrestlers have on children, and, most important, national security.

"It is a distinct possibility that these anti-American wrestlers are more than 'just talk,' " wrote Joy M. Crider-Good for the majority view. "Any threat to our national security, however slight or great it may be, should be crushed. I do not feel [that allowing anti-American wrestlers to compete] is worth that risk. I believe our government should discern which wrestlers' activities could be translated as dangerous to our national security. U.S. governmental agencies have the ability to trace ties with known terrorists [such as Khadafy] or foreign intelligence agencies (such as the K.G.B.), and either confirm or refute such possible threats. These wrestlers could then easily be expelled from the United States or held liable if their actions are proven to be criminal."

Billy Buddha of Richmond, Virginia, felt otherwise. "Reactionary ideas always find ready acceptance among the unthinking," he wrote. "I also know that, with the objects of their 'hate red' gone, most of those idiots will soon lose interest in attending matches. And probably stop buying your mags as well. It's the fault of the promoters, really. They're the ones who nurtured this so-called 'anti-Americanism' in the first place to line their own pockets. The wrestlers themselves don't seem to be doing badly, either. Now, they're in danger of being hoisted by their own petard. Maybe it's not such a bad idea after all. Without the America-baiting, there'd be little use for drooling cretins such as Sgt. Slaughter, Cpl. Kirchner, and that biggest hypocrite of all, the Hulkster . . ."

Mail ballot to: **You Decide/*Wrestling 86***
Box 48, Rockville Centre, New York 11571

( ) Stan Hansen should have been stripped of the AWA title

( ) Stan Hansen should not have been stripped of the AWA title

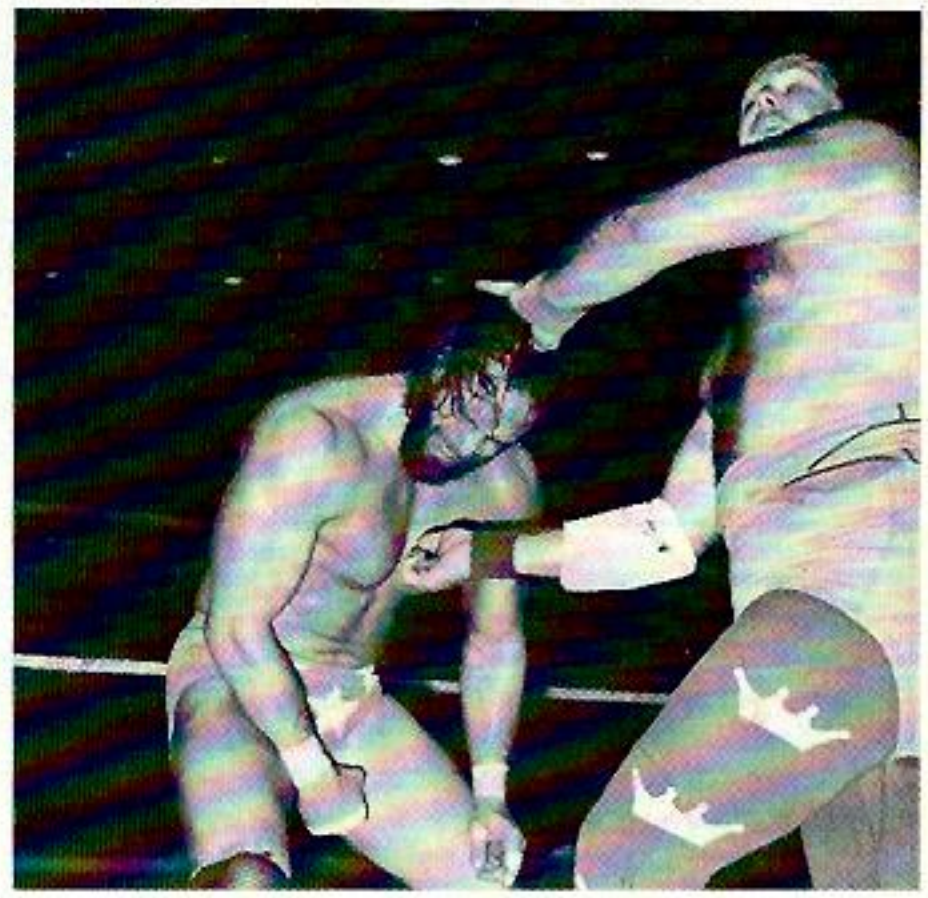
Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

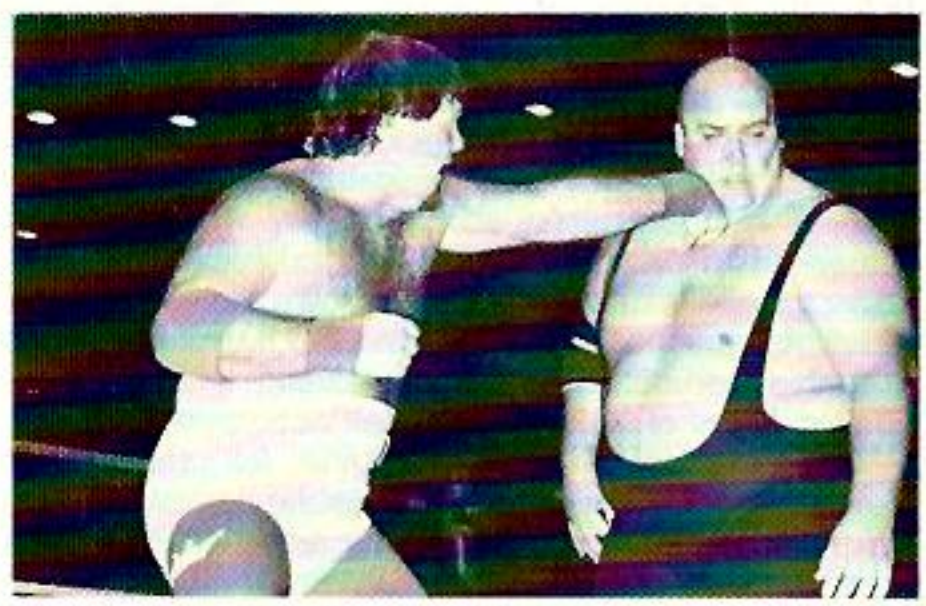
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Jerry Lawler

(Continued from page 40)



Former WWF champion The Iron Sheik tries to regain his vision after being belted in the eyes by Lawler (above). The King sets up current WWF Intercontinental champion Randy Savage for an uppercut (right).



Lawler has turned some heads with the power in his left hand. NWA champion Ric Flair (left) and current number four WWF contender King Kong Bundy (above) feel The King's wrath.

ple don't take it seriously.

"Memphis fans know how good the level of competition is down here. These are good people here in Memphis. They appreciate good grappling for what it is. They don't need all kinds of crazy gimmicks."

Of course, this is the same man who wrestled the late comedian Andy Kaufman all the way to *Late Night With David Letterman*. The same man whose vanity competes with the narcissism of rulers of real kingdoms.

"I've never met a man more in love with his own face," cries Lawler's longtime friend and longertime nemesis Bill Dundee. "The guy's face is all over Memphis. It's like a nightmare. He's on television, on billboards, in the newspapers. Man, he's so creepy looking. I don't understand the infatuation. What do people see in him?"

Born November 29, 1949, in Memphis, Lawler very early showed that his talent laid more in self-promotion than it did in the ring. Lawler had no amateur experience at all, never dropped a kick or laced on a boot until his professional debut. His artistic endeavors and his fan's love of the sport is what allowed him the opportunity to become a professional wrestler and also enamored him to the world of television and to the fame generated by the bright lights.

As a teenager, Lawler had begun sending caricatures of pro wrestlers to announcer Lance Russell on WHBQ-TV in Memphis. Russell used the imaginative drawings to fill up empty air time, only to discover that the portraits were often more entertaining than the interviews themselves.

Russell introduced Lawler to Memphis' most famous wrestler, Jackie Fargo, and country/western singer Eddie Bond, both of whom encouraged Lawler to continue his work, commissioning Jerry to do several drawings for their personal collection.

Lawler entered Memphis State to pursue the study of commercial art. There he entered a contest sponsored by local DJ Scott Shannon (now a top-rated DJ on New York's WHTZ) to draw a picture of a monster Shannon had created to devour those few people who didn't listen to his program. Lawler captured second prize and was awarded a stereo for his effort. But what impressed Lawler was the public adoration enjoyed by Shannon. Fans mobbed the young DJ. Girls begged for his autograph.

The same was true for the wrestlers Lawler had gotten to know at the TV

station. All of them attracted pretty women, drove late model cars, and seemed to have an endless supply of money.

Lawler, who by this time had acquired his own DJ spot on the college radio, decided to gamble. He offered a small-time promoter free ad space on his radio show if the promoter allowed him to wrestle once a week. The promoter agreed, and that night Lawler was paid the princely sum of $5 to get annihilated with another upstart, Jerry Vickers, by the experienced team of The Masked Executioners.

The extra publicity bothered rival promoter Nick Gulas. Gulas promoted many of Jackie Fargo's matches and asked his star if he'd talk Lawler out of doing his radio spots. Lawler struck a deal with Fargo. In exchange for hyping Gulas' promotion over the air, Fargo would train and condition Lawler. This proved to be Lawler's biggest break. Fargo was a veteran with international experience. He gave Lawler the foundation upon which the youngster would become one of the world's foremost grapplers.

Last May, the King made the bold pronouncement that he would retire from the sport by year's end if he didn't own Rick Martel's AWA belt or Ric Flair's NWA belt. December 31 came and went and Lawler, still without the belt but unwilling to retire, sunk into a deep depression.

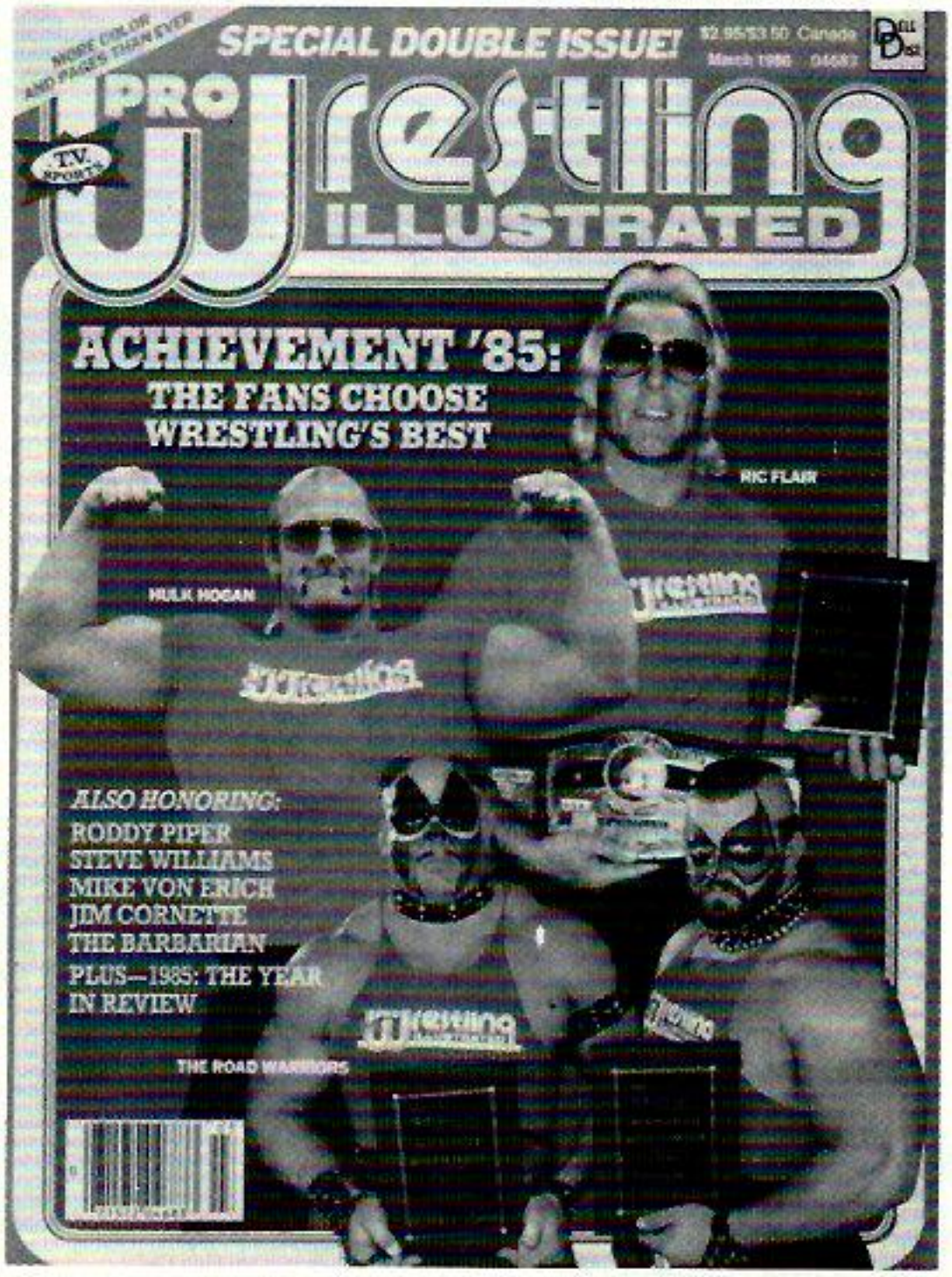
Emulating his rock 'n' roll namesake, Lawler took to a steady diet of alcohol to relieve his frustration. Friends, fans, and family intervened. Lawler emerged from his funk, weaker but wiser. "I've learned to watch what I say. Sometimes my desire to please my fans gets in the way of reality. I have to watch myself carefully. And booze was certainly a childish way of dealing with my problems. I'll never go that route again."

Yet it is this desire to please his Memphis fans that has caused his name and talents to go largely unnoticed over the years. Lawler's refusal to stray far from his roots have helped earn him the unofficial title as "the greatest wrestler never to win a world title."

"That doesn't bother me," he claims. "I'm respected by wrestlers all over the world. I've fought practically everyone in the world. The fact that I've never won a world title rankles me a bit, but staying in Memphis, being with my family, and tending to my business concerns has always been more important. If I'm meant to win that gold belt, then it'll happen. But I'm not willing to go around the world chasing it. I'm satisfied with my career. For a guy barely six feet tall and under 240 pounds with no amateur wrestling experience, I think I've done pretty damn good."

"Go ask Hulk Hogan. He'll tell you." □

A SECOND CHANCE TO CATCH "THE BIG ONE"



The year-end issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* is always the most anticipated wrestling magazine of the year. And the 1985 year-end issue (March 1986 cover date) was the best one we ever published. At 92 pages, it was our biggest magazine ever and, in addition to the year-end features *PWI* readers have come to expect, it contained eight full-color pages. We have limited supplies of this newsstand sell-out, so don't be disappointed twice. Order your copy today. Only $5.00.

Make check or money order payable and send to:
TV SPORTS
BOX 48
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571

"THE BIG ONE" ONLY $5.00

Please rush me ..... copies of the March issue of *PWI*. I enclose $5.00 for each one I am ordering.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

U.S. funds only. All other countries $7.00. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

AWESOME THREESOME

Did you miss out on ***Pro Wrestling Illustrated's Super Color Specials 5, 6, & 7?*** Well, here's a second chance to have wall-to-wall super color excitement! We are now offering a three-pack of these newsstand sellouts, which will be delivered straight to your door. Each ***Super Color Special*** magazine folds out into a giant *8-page* 22" x 32" SuperCenterfold (*four* times the size of a regular *PWI* centerfold!).

Only $8.00 for all three.

HERE'S WHAT YOU GET

SUPER COLOR SPECIAL #5

Stories: The Girls Of Wrestling: Who's The Sexiest? . . . The Rock 'n' Roll Express Answer Your 10 Most Personal Questions . . . Action Update.

SuperCenterfold: **Hulk Hogan: Where Does He Rate Among Past WWF Champions?**

SUPER COLOR SPECIAL #6

Stories: Hulk Hogan: Wrestling's Most Hated Man! . . . Lex Lugar: The Next King Of Wrestling? . . . Action Update.

SuperCenterfold: **The Road Warriors Win The Crockett Cup**

SUPER COLOR SPECIAL #7

Stories: Rick Steamboat: Is He Snakebit In His Quest To Win The I-C Belt? . . . Steve "Dr. Death" Williams: His Prescription For Greatness . . . Action Update.

SuperCenterfold: **The Rock 'n' Roll Express: Solid Gold!**

ALL THREE SUPER COLOR SPECIALS FOR ONLY $8.00!

MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:

T.V. SPORTS
BOX 48
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571

AWESOME THREESOME

Please send me a three-pack containing **Super Color Specials 5, 6, & 7.**
I enclose $8.00 for each three-pack I am ordering.

PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

For all orders except the U.S. and Canada, you *must add* one dollar for every back issue ordered for boat mail, and two dollars for every back issue ordered for airmail. U.S. funds only.

NO SUBSTITUTIONS!

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery

Missy Hyatt

(Continued from page 39)

know, and you just don't wanna mess around with him. From what I've heard, Akbar is bringing in a masked man to join his stable, and that should be pretty wild!

JACK VICTORY: Besides having a terrific body, Jack is really a hot tootin' wrestler. He teams up with John occasionally and I just have this little feelin' that Jack and John are gonna win the tag team belts pretty soon. Not to take anything away from Eddie and Sting, but that's just the way I feel. Jack likes to get rowdy and can he make things happen! That's one thing Jack and I have in common, but there's one other big thing: We both hate Dark Journey.

THE MISSING LINK: This beast is the sub-human that Dark Journey brought in to take care of her business. I'll never forget the day Dark Journey announced that The Missing Link was coming here. She climbed into the ring, grabbed that microphone, and everybody's waiting for this big announcement, and in comes The Missing Link. I almost died laughing. I'll tell ya this, she better come up with something better than The Missing Link if she doesn't wanna be run out of town.

RICK STEINER: *Ooh!* Ricky is such a cutie. If I didn't have Johnny, I'd go right for him. He's 250 pounds of solid muscle and he really knows how to move. Eddie signed him not too long ago, and now he's under both our management. Baby, I could teach Ricky a few things about love, but listen, if I say anything else 'bout him, I'm just gonna get myself in trouble.

MISSY HYATT: That's me! I figured I'd save the best for last. She's gorgeous, and smart, and sexy, and all the guys say she's built like a brick outhouse, or somethin' like that, and before long, everybody's gonna stop and say, "Ya know who that is? That's Missy Hyatt and she's the queen of the UWF." And you know what? I got the perfect way to prove it. The UWF and *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* are getting together to organize this tournament, and from what I hear, it's gonna start in late October. You'll want to keep your ears open for details. Well, I just know that one of my boys is gonna bring me home that trophy. They'll all do anything for li'l ol' Missy. Just anything! □

INFOCENTER

Do you have a wrestling history question? A question about wrestling's current events? How about a technical question regarding the rules of the sport? In each issue, *Wrestling 86's* research department will provide the answers. Send your questions to:

InfoCenter
Box 48
Rockville Centre, NY 11571

Q: My father recently told me a story about a wrestler who died during a match here in British Columbia in the early 1960s. Do you have any information on this?—*Roger MacKenzie, Prince George, BC, Canada*

A: Ring deaths have occurred in the sport, though they are quite rare. This is probably the match your father was talking about: On June 16, 1962, in Victoria, British Columbia, Johnny Demchuck of North Hollywood, California, collapsed midway through a 20-minute bout with British wrestler Oliver Winrush, who was applying pressure after twisting one of Demchuck's arms into a hammerlock. A commissioner at ringside was quoted in the newspaper the next day as noting that "Demchuck's face suddenly turned blue and he passed out." The coroner said Demchuck died of a heart attack.

Q: As far as I know, the only father and son combination to both hold world titles are Fritz (AWA) and Kerry (NWA) Von Erich. Is there anybody else in this select group?—*Billy Ellis, Norman Park, GA*

A: No, there isn't. It is interesting to note that both Von Erichs' title reigns were brief, however. Fritz won the AWA title from Verne Gagne on July 27, 1963, in Omaha, Nebraska; Gagne regained the belt 12 days later in Amarillo, Texas. Kerry dethroned Ric Flair for the NWA belt on May 6, 1984, in Irving, Texas; Flair regained the title 18 days later in Yokosuka City, Japan. As far as another father and son world champion combination occurring in the near future, there are really only two men who could make it happen: Greg Gagne in the AWA (Verne Gagne held the AWA title an unprecedented nine times), and David Sammartino in the WWF (his father, Bruno, held the WWF title on two occasions).

Q: Who had the longest continuous NWA title reign in history?—*Stephen Caruso, Ellicott City, MD*

A: That honor belongs to six-time NWA champion Lou Thesz. His fourth of six NWA title reigns began on July 20, 1948, in Indianapolis, when he defeated Bill Longson. Thesz held the title until March 15, 1956, when he was defeated by Whipper Billy Watson in Toronto. Total length of the reign: seven years, seven months, 25 days.

Q: I have been collecting wrestling magazines for many years. I own several magazines from 1973 and 1974 that are entitled "Ben Strong Wrestling." Who was Ben Strong? Can you tell me a little bit about him?—*Randy Morgen, Newark, NJ*

A: Born in 1914, Ben Strong (whose real name was Felix Benhill Stravinski) was an avid sports enthusiast whose interests included not only wrestling, but boxing, hockey, and football. As a teenager and young adult, Strong participated in all of the above sports. Hockey and football were more or less passing interests, but amateur wrestling and, in particular, boxing were his real loves (as an amateur boxer, Strong amassed a modest 22-4 record with 13 kayos). Strong made his living at a variety of jobs, including foreman for the construction of several buildings in the New York metropolitan area during the early-'50s. Strong earned a comfortable living, but made a fair amount of money when he invested some of his construction earnings in a percentage of the "Iron Chest" physical fitness device, popular in the early-'60s. In 1971, Strong (by then in retirement) contacted magazine publisher Stanley Weston and used some of his money to help finance a series of magazines devoted to his favorite sports: wrestling, boxing, hockey, and football. The "Ben Strong Series" of magazines sold extremely well in the years 1973-1975, but for varying complex legal reasons were discontinued shortly thereafter. Strong died in 1981 at the age of 67 when he suffered a heart attack playing tennis at a friend's home on Long Island.

Q: I know that before he was wrestling's most successful manager, Lou Albano was also a very successful wrestler. Can you tell me when and where his debut match took place?—*Tony Manfrey, Boston*

A: Albano, who probably achieved his greatest notoriety as a wrestler when he teamed with Tony Altimore in the early-'60s (the team, known as The Sicilians, was not particularly successful) wrestled his debut match in 1963 (no exact date known) in Montreal, Canada. His opponent, whom he defeated, was Bob Lozaran. □

DRAW ANY PERSON
in one minute!
NO LESSONS! NO TALENT!

Artist's Conception

New Amazing Invention —"Magic Art Reproducer." You can draw Your Family, Friends, animals, landscapes, buildings, vases, bowls of fruit, copy photos, comics, designs, maps, anything — Like An Artist Even If You CAN'T DRAW A Straight Line! Anything you want to draw is automatically seen on any sheet of paper thru the "Magic Art Reproducer." Then easily follow the lines of the "Picture Image" with a pencil for an original "professional looking" drawing. Also reduces or enlarges.

NORTON PRODUCTS
Dept. 865, P.O. Box 20112
New Rochelle, NY 10802

Send **$5.98** plus **95¢** for shipping and handling. No C.O.D.'s, please. Money Back Guarantee if not satisfied.

Semi-Automatic
$3.95

This authentic looking replica of Commando-style machine gun represents that used by the U.S. Green Berets in the Viet Nam war and the British attack forces in the Falkland War. Comes equipped with precision sights for greater accuracy and a side-loading magazine that easily locks into place for added safety. Our 22-calibre semi-automatic clip-fed machine pistol fires as rapidly as you can pull the trigger. Holds 10 rounds. Includes 35 reusable pellets and free gun targets. Equipped with compact grip handle. Ideal for target practice and just plain sport. So act now! 30-day money back guarantee. Send only $3.95 plus 95c shipping & handling.
World of Adventure, Inc., Dept. 495
P.O. Box 1449, Pompano Bch, FL 33061

MAGNIFYING READING GLASSES

SEE BETTER! PAY LESS!

Small type in phone books, contracts, ads, etc. are easy to read with these crystal clear, polished, ground impact-resistant optical lenses with sturdy dark frames. Each with vinyl sheath. 30-day money-back guarantee. Send right away. Give whether man or woman. Add $1 postage & handling. Order 2 for $7.95.

Ladies' style
Men's style
Ladies' ½ specs
Men's ½ specs

NANCY JONES HEALTH WORLD, Dept. 288
P.O. Box 879, Deerfield, FL 33441

Research saves lives.

American Heart Association
WE'RE FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE

THIS JUST IN . . .

John Stossel's lawsuit against David Shultz, Vince McMahon, and Titan Sports is still pending, according to Stossel's attorney, Robert Kelner. The depositions of Stossel, an ABC-TV newsman, and Titan Sports President McMahon have already been heard, and Shultz's deposition was scheduled to be heard in August. Barring a settlement, the case could come to trial by October. Stossel is seeking punitive damages from Shultz, McMahon, and Titan Sports (the parent company of the WWF), stemming from an incident last December in the Madison Square Garden dressing room corridor in which Shultz hit Stossel, who was taping a segment for 20/20. When Stossel told Shultz that he thought wrestling was fake, the wrestler hit him with two blows on either side of the head. Said Kelner: "Indications have been made by Shultz that McMahon ordered him to strike Stossel, using language to the effect of 'tear his ass up.'" Stossel alleges that he suffered permanent damage to both ears as a result of the blows. "John has laborynth contusions in both ears," Kelner said. "There is no loss of hearing, but there is pain when he hears high-pitched sounds." Stossel is seeking damages in excess of $10,000 in Federal Court.

Nikita Koloff and The Rock 'n' Roll Express have won the United States heavyweight championship and the NWA World tag team titles, respectively. Koloff pinned Magnum T.A. on August 17 in Charlotte, North Carolina, in the deciding match of their best-of-seven series. Here's what happened: Ivan Koloff was pulling T.A.'s hair when Magnum went outside the ring and piledrived him on the floor. Khrushchev then came out and got into a shouting match with Magnum, which the referee tried to break up. When Magnum returned to the ring, Nikita took out his chain, jumped off the top rope, and hit T.A. Nikita threw the chain out of the ring before the referee could see it, then covered Magnum for the pin. The U.S. belt had been taken away from Magnum T.A. and put up in the championship series after Magnum assaulted NWA President Bob Geigel . . . One day earlier, The Rock 'n' Roll Express earned the tag team belts by winning a two-out-of-three falls match from The Midnight Express at the Philadelphia Civic Center. The archrivals split the first two falls, and in the third, Rick Morton came off the top rope to small package Dennis Condrey for the pin. The Midnight Express had held the belts since February 2, 1986, when they defeated The Rock 'n' Roll Express in Atlanta.

Pro Wrestling Illustrated and the UWF have reached an agreement to sponsor a large-scale tournament, tentatively set to begin Halloween night in Houston. Matches are scheduled to continue through mid-December, when the final will be held in Houston. All of the top wrestlers in the UWF are expected to compete in what should be a landmark event. Further details are to be released in the January issue of Pro Wrestling Illustrated, on sale October 21.